



TENNESSEE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Volume 46, Number 3

September 2022

Inside this issue...

Alabama Snow Wreath	1
President's Musing's	2
Cullowhee Native Plant Conference	3
Places to See Natives: Roan Mountain	4,5
Field Trip Report Van Buren County Powerline Walk	7
Field Trip Report Meandering through a Meadow	7

Upcoming Seminars: The Tennessee Native Plant Society hosts monthly Native Plant Seminars. These events are held via Zoom on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Central (7:30 p.m. Eastern) and last about one hour. All members, and potential members, are welcome to join the seminars at no cost. The link to join each seminar is posted on our Calendar website pages.

Steve Murphree <i>Insect Pollinators</i>	Sept 20
Larry Pounds <i>Fall Wildflowers</i>	Oct 18
Margie Hunter <i>Beyond Aesthetics:</i>	Nov 15

Upcoming Fieldtrip

Roadside Botanizing in Northern Decatur County Leader Bart Jones	Sept 20
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Alabama Snow Wreath

by Dennis Horn

I was canoeing the Elk River when I climbed out to check on some shooting stars on the bank. I looked up the hillside and noticed a white flowering shrub that I did not recognize. I took a couple of flowering twigs, hoping I would find someone that could identify the shrub. I could not. This was 6 years before the TNPS was founded, and long before internet and iNaturalist. Finally in 1979, in a book by Blanche Dean on wildflowers of Alabama, I found a photo that looked like my mystery shrub. The snow wreath was verified and published as a species new to Tennessee in 1981.

Alabama Snow Wreath (*Neviusia alabamensis*) was first discovered by Rev. Dr. Reuben Nevius and Prof. Wyman along the Black Warrior River near Tuscaloosa, AL. In 1857 it was described as a new genus in the Rose family by Dr. Asa Gray. Dr. Nevius was an Episcopal clergyman and plant collector that corresponded with Dr. Gray from time to time. Dr. Gray was the

botanical authority on plants at Harvard University in the late 1800s.

Alabama Snow Wreath (also simply called Snow Wreath or *Neviusia*) is a deciduous shrub and an unusual member of the Rose family. The flowers have no petals, but numerous showy white stamens. Much like blackberry



Neviusia alabamensis, Alabama Snow Wreath

and raspberry, *Neviusia* sends up sterile shoots (canes) the first year, then flowers the second year. The shrub is 3-6 feet tall, with thorn-less, orangish-brown stems and zigzag twigs. The bark on mature stems exfoliates. *Neviusia* forms colonies sometimes up to 100 yards long in the wild.

The leaves are simple, alternate, spaced about one inch apart along the twig. The leaf blade is 2-3 in. long with a ½ in. petiole. The leaves are oval with acuminate tips and have fine doubly toothed margins. The leaf surface is medium green colored above, paler beneath with prominent downy veins below.

Continued on page 6

TNPS Newsletter

This newsletter is a publication of the Tennessee Native Plant Society and is published four times a year, generally in March, June, September, and December.

The Tennessee Native Plant Society (TNPS) was founded in 1977. Its purposes are to assist in the exchange of information and encourage fellowship among Tennessee's botanists, both amateur and professional; to promote public education about Tennessee flora and wild plants in general; to provide, through publication of a newsletter or journal, a formal means of documenting information on Tennessee flora and of informing the public about wild plants; and to promote the protection and enhancement of Tennessee's wild plant communities.

Dues for each calendar year are:

Individual/Family: \$20

Student: Complimentary

Institution: \$50

Life: \$250

Dues may be sent to:

Tennessee Native Plant Society

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Nashville, TN 37215

Officers

Karen Ripple Hill, President

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Bettina Ault, Secretary

Kim Sadler, Treasurer

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Dennis Horn

Bart Jones

Larry Pounds

Newsletter Editor

Donna Bollenbach

President's Musings

The only constant in life is change." I'm not sure who first said that, but it does seem to be true.

The seasons change. Summer fades into fall. Our late summer wildflowers start developing their seed heads, and before long even our fall flowers will have gone to seed as well.

It's been a strange weather year for many of us. First it was too warm too early, then it was too cold for late spring. Flowers were confused. June which usually sees plenty of rain gave my plants not a single drop for five weeks plus exceedingly high temperatures. The turtleheads formed thick buds that never opened... they turned brown and dried up. July and August, which are usually hot and dry, had periods of heavy rain. My flowers have been confused about when to bloom. Some of my late spring natives bloomed in mid-summer. Now I'm wondering what fall will bring. Has the weather caused confusion for the plants in your area also?

As I write this my husband David and I are enjoying some of the geological

wonders of Greenland and Iceland—it's the trip of a lifetime! We've seen volcanoes (old and new), geysers, boiling mud, steam vents, and a power plant run entirely on thermal energy from underground. We've even stood in the rift between tectonic plates in Iceland! Then we witnessed glaciers

(some at high elevations with waterfalls of ice melt tumbling hundreds of feet), dodged icebergs large and small, and seen the craggy heights of Greenland. Minke whales have come alongside our ship and seals have been seen

swimming about their daily business. And everywhere we've witnessed the tenacity of plants.

The forests on both islands are long gone, but lichens, mosses, grasses, and wildflowers are abundant forming thick carpets as they create soil above the lava rock for crops, pasture, and wildness. I never expected to see so much beauty so close to the cold Arctic Circle. If you ever have a chance to make such a trip, take it! The conditions may be very harsh in winter, but in summer these

islands are amazing.


**TNPS ELECTIONS**

All four TNPS officers and three board members are up for reelection this fall. If anyone is interested in running for one of these offices or wishes to nominate someone (with their consent), please inform the board using our website [Contact Us](#) form no later than November 1st so that you/they may be placed on the ballot. Positions and current office holders up for reelection include the following:

President – Karen R Hill

Vice President – Allen Trently

Secretary – Bettina Ault

Treasurer – Kim Sadler

Board Members

Dennis Horn – Middle TN

Louise Gregory – East TN

Larry Pounds – East TN

All current office holders have agreed to serve another term. If there are no additional nominees, then these officers will remain in office for another two-year term.

Saying "WHEE!" for Native Plants!

*The 2022 Cullowhee Native Plant Conference
by Shelby Lyn Sanders, TNPS Scholarship Recipient*

While the summer blazed on into the third week of July, the "native plant nerds" of southern Appalachia descended upon Cullowhee, North Carolina, for a flora-filled week of nonstop native plant immersion. More than a couple hundred eco-nerds took off in hiking boots and Chacos for field trips full of rare and endemic plants.

Plants and field guides filled vendor tables, beckoning to be taken home. Networking took place amidst the formal conference proceedings and in the form of a good old-fashioned tailgate in the parking lot. A particularly enthralling guest speaker even got an entire audience of native plant lovers to open their arms wide and proclaim, "I am a mushroom!" ...and this was just my first time at the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference.

'Whee', as it is affectionately called by long-time conference-goers, began in 1984 with a \$7,000 grant from TVA that was directed to Western Carolina University to hold a "Plant Utilization" meeting, and the first "Landscaping with Native Plants Conference" was born. The joy of meeting with so many like-minded folks,

all sharing the enthusiasm and advocacy for native plants and ecosystems, was infectious and sprang hope for all concerned about the threats to

biodiversity we see in our daily lives.

I want to begin my narrative of this amazing week by saying thank you to all those members of the Tennessee Native Plant Society (TNPS) who made my attendance possible. THANK YOU! Field trips on my first day were to Black Balsam Knob, and the vertical bog at Wolf Mountain Overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway. I saw so many incredible plants that I had

never seen before, and some I hadn't even HEARD of. Our knowledgeable guide showed us more than five

different species of *Hypericum*, seas of beautiful native grasses like wavy hairgrass (*Avenella flexuosa*) on the bald, and numerous endemic bog plants, including sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) and the southernmost range of American Cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*).

I was in a state of awe like I hadn't been since learning about native plants for the first time as an undergraduate wildlife student at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Continued on page 6



Chamaenerion angustifolium



Hypericum graveolens

CULLOWHEE NATIVE PLANT CONFERENCE

The Cullowhee Native Plant Conference was initiated in 1984 with a grant from the Tennessee Valley Authority. It is held yearly at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina, located between the Great Smoky and Blue Ridge mountains, approximately fifty miles west of Asheville.

The conference is designed to increase interest in and knowledge of propagating and preserving native Southeastern plant species in the landscape and includes regional field trips by vehicle, hikes and canoe, workshops, and presentations led by an international contingent of botanists and gardening enthusiasts. Space is limited. This year's attendance was 380 from 15 states plus the District of Columbia.

For many years the Tennessee Native Plant Society has supported this conference with an annual scholarship to enable students and young professionals to attend. If interested, visit <https://www.wcu.edu/engage/professional-enrichment/conferences-and-community-classes/the-Cullowhee-native-plant-conference/>. The scholarship Application Form and Recommendation Form are in the right column.

If interested in attending, mark your calendars now. The next conference will be held July 18-22, 2023. For more information about the conference and registration, go to nativeplants.wcu.edu or call 828-227-7397.

In Pursuit of Native Wildflowers: Roan Mountain by Donna Bollenbach

This is the first of a series on **Places to See Natives**. It will center on Tennessee but may include areas in north Georgia, north Alabama, and western North Carolina where shared species are found. I have several experiences I can draw on, but your contributions are welcome.

Our friendship is rooted in our mutual love of native plants (and, if the truth be told, craft beers.) We plan our vacations around peak blooms in the Spring and Fall. Janet, more so than me, has a plant “wish list” for each trip. Our quest for the target plants motivates us to hike further and explore new areas.

For the last two years, we have visited Roan Mountain and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Janet had been to the area several times, but it had been many years since I was there. Our first trip was in mid to late June 2021. The two native wildflowers on Janet’s list that year were Gray’s Lily, *Lilium grayi*, and the Lesser Purple Fringed Orchid, *Platanthera psycodes*. Our second trip in 2022 was in late June/early July. The target plants were the Gray’s Lily (again because we did not see it in 2021) and the Turk’s Cap Lily, *Lilium superbum*. Of course, we saw many other amazing wildflowers and breathtaking views.



Tassel Rue, *Trauvetteria carolinensis*

In both years, we started our wildflower pilgrimage in the Roan Mountain area near the Tennessee/North Carolina border. In mid-June 2021, we marveled at the peak blooms of the Catawba, *Rhododendron*

catawbiense, along Carver’s Gap to Round Bald. When we visited the same area in late June this year, the Catawba was done blooming, and the Flame Azaleas, *Rhododendron calendulaceum*, and Mountain Laurel, *Kalmia latifolia*, were waning. Even without the flowers, walking through the thickets of the broad-leaved evergreen rhododendron bushes was impressive.

Leaving the rhododendron path, we entered a dense

mossy spruce-fir forest. The leafless lower branches of the trees intertwine in an eerie pattern. Coming out of the woods, we reached a rocky bald with a predominance of grasses, shrubs, wildflowers, and a scatter of fir trees. In 2021 and 2022, we saw many of the same wildflowers, including Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*, Three-toothed Cinquefoil, *Sibbaldiopsis tridentata*, Fringed Yellow



The nodding bells of Gray’s Lily, *Lilium grayi*

Loosestrife, *Lysimachia ciliata*, Tassel Rue, *Trauvetteria carolinensis*, *Hypericum*, *Hypericum spp.*, and more. In mid-June, we saw blueberries, raspberries, and huckleberry flowers, *Vaccinium spp.*, but in late June, the flowers gave way to berries that, unfortunately, were not ripe. A few weeks later and we would have been feasting on the fruit.

As we descended Round Bald into Engine Gap, we spotted our first target plant, the nodding bells of the Gray’s Lily. The tall plants with whorled leaves and 2-5 reddish-orange flowers on each stalk were easy to spot above the bald grasses. The inside of the flower is yellow and freckled with purple leopard-like spots.



Inside the Gray’s Lily flower

Continued on pg. 5

Places to See Natives... continued from page 4

Signs along the Appalachian Trail warned people not to touch the flowers to prevent the spread of a fungal disease that threatens the future of this rare plant.

Of course, I must mention the breathtaking panoramic views from the top of Round Bald. At the



The Appalachians through a grove of fir trees on Round Bald.

moment of this photo, wispy clouds lingered in the peaks and valleys of the mountains, but the atmosphere changes constantly. One moment we are in a dense fog, the next, it was clear.

After visiting the bald, we went to the Miller Farmstead in Roan Mountain State Park. The Miller House was built in 1909 and is now preserved as a reminder of the way folks used to live in these mountains. A barn, corn crib, hog pen, root cellar, smokehouse, chicken house, spring house, and an outhouse surrounds the old house. But our interest was in what was growing in the gardens and meadows around the home. Common Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*,

Butterflyweed, *Asclepias tuberosa*, Coneflowers, *Echinacea* spp., Queen Anne's Lace, *Daucus carota*, Flowering Raspberry, *Rubus odoratus*, and many other native wildflowers were scattered across the property. Also, the beautiful Rosebay, *Rhododendron maxima*, was in bloom throughout the park. On a plaque above the farmstead, The National Wildlife Federation recognized the area as a *Certified Wildlife Habitat*.



Common Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*

Bloom times on Roan Mountain for many of the species mentioned are June and July, but it is best to check with online or local resources to verify if a specific plant is in bloom. I often refer to the Facebook Group: "Wildflowers...What's Blooming in Tennessee."

Roan Mountain State Park is at 527 TN-143, Roan Mountain Road in Northeast Tennessee. They have cabins, but you must reserve early for the summer months, especially during the Rhododendron Festival, the 3rd weekend in June. The Miller Farmstead is in the park, and Carver's Gap, Round Bald, and Roan Mountain Gardens are a short drive away along TN-143 at the Tennessee/North Carolina Border. There are many other places to see wildflowers in the area if you are willing to drive and hike.

Coming in December: In Pursuit of Native Wildflowers: The Blue Ridge Parkway



Left: Catawba, *Rhododendron catawbiense*

Right: Rosebay, *Rhododendron maxima*



Left: Flame Azalea, *Rhododendron calendulaceum*

Right: Mountain Laurel, *Kalmia latifolia*

Alabama Snow Wreath...continued from page 1

The flowers occur in 3-5 flowered leafy cymes on flower stalks about 1 in. long. Flowers have 5 whitish-green, blunt-tipped sepals, toothed at the end, and persist after flowering. There are no petals, but there are numerous white showy stamens with pale yellow anthers. Each flower is about 0.6 in. across. *Neviusia* flowers in early April. The drupe-like fruits rarely produce viable seed.

At the time *Neviusia* was first discovered in Tennessee, it was known only from Alabama and Arkansas and one historic site in southern Missouri. It has since been found in NW Georgia and in Mississippi. In Tennessee it is now known from 4 counties in Middle TN and 2 counties in East TN. *Neviusia* is considered rare in all 5 states where it occurs.

Other related shrubs include another species of *Neviusia* that was discovered in 1992 in Shasta Co., CA in the mountains near Lake Shasta. It was named *Neviusia cliftonia* and is called Shasta Snow Wreath. It is

quite similar to our Alabama Snow Wreath, but has deciduous white petals that quickly shed. Other genera related to *Nestronia* in the Rose Family are *Kerria japonica* (Japanese rose) and *Rhodotypos scandens* (Black Jetbead), both native to China, Korea, and Japan. The leaves of both genera are similar to *Neviusia*. *Kerria* has showy orangish-yellow flowers and green stems. *Rhodotypos* has 4 showy white petals, shiny black fruit (poisonous), and leaves that are opposite on the stem. Both plants can escape from cultivation, but only Black Jetbead is invasive.



Alabama Snow Wreath

Neviusia is rare in its native habitat, usually found on rich rocky hillsides in neutral soil.

However, it is easily cultivated and makes a nice garden or border shrub. It can be started from rhizomes or stem clippings. *Neviusia* prefers well drained soil and full to partial sunlight. Because it is easily cultivated, there is no danger of it becoming extinct, even though it is rare in the wild.

Saying "Whee" for Native Plants...continued from page 3

Imagine hiking through beautiful high-elevation forests with 15-20 people who are just as jazzed about plants and nature as you are—it was a truly blessed experience.

I attended many interesting talks, including one given by representatives from the Eastern Band of the Cherokee, discussing the historical tribal management of land and native plant resources as well as a look at how the tribe continues to advocate for the importance of native plants, both to their culture as well as the unique biodiversity of the region.

Other talks included various takes on integrating native plants into public parks and other spaces, keeping in mind both aesthetics and benefit to pollinators and other wildlife. Talks ranged beyond native plants to topics like moths, birds, and yes, mushrooms—but this just underscored how connected every element of nature truly is.

As Aldo Leopold famously wrote, "To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering." This framework of thinking was prevalent and cohesive among those attending this year's

conference, a turnout of about 400 folks...some on the steering committee remarked that such numbers hadn't been seen since the 1990s.

Again—THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH for allowing me this amazing experience.



Lilium superbum

Van Buren County Powerline Walk

Field Trip Report by Larry Pounds



Screwstem, *Bartonia virginica*, (about 7 inches tall, almost no leaves)

Ten people attended the Van Buren Powerline Walk on September 3, 2022. It was a joint outing of the Tennessee Native Plant Society (TNPS) and the Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning (TCWP). Larry Pounds of TNPS led the walk.

We started out driving in the rain, which was heavy at times, but when we got out of our vehicles at the right-of-way the weather was nearly perfect. We walked into a major natural plant display. Yellow came from many species of composites, particularly tickseed sunflower, *Bidens polylepis*, tall coreopsis, *Coreopsis tripteris*, stiff-haired sunflower, *Helianthus hirsutus*, and Appalachian sunflower, *Helianthus atrorubens*. Less showy were three species of goldenrod, *Solidago odorata*, *Solidago nemoralis*, and *Solidago rugosa*.

White came from the thoroughworts (*Eupatorium*), including Boneset, *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, and hyssopleaf thoroughwort, *Eupatorium hyssopifolia*, as well as the tall flat-topped white aster, *Doellingeria umbellata*. Very showy was hollow Joe-Pye weed, *Eupatorium fistulosum*, in pink.



Fernleaf false foxglove, *Aureolaria pectinata*

We were too early for most of the asters, but we did see one purple aster, *Symphyotricum patens*. Downy lobelia, *Lobelia puberula*, and blue curls, *Trichostema dichotomum* added blue.

Other plants fascinated us even though they were not important to the display.

These included Screwstem, *Bartonia virginica*, which is so small that we almost didn't find it despite my having flagged it the day before the outing, and fernleaf false foxglove, *Aureolaria pectinata*, which had a delicate soft look from its leaves.

As suspected, the fringeless orchid species were nearly done, but we saw a few yellow fringed orchids, *Platanthera ciliaris*, still with color.

Meanderings Through a Meadow

Field Trip Report by Allan Trently

Five people attended the meadow walk at Walker Branch State Natural Area on September 3, 2022. Walker Branch is a 520-acre natural area in Hardin County. The site contains a diversity of plant communities: marshes, swamps, bottomland hardwoods, seep forest, open water, meadows, and mesic and dry-mesic forests dominated by oaks and hickories.



Dion Skipper

Trip leader Allan Trently led the group through one of the meadows. Though no rare or uncommon plants were found, the group was treated to a rich palette of late summer colors from the abundance of goldenrods, ironweed, smartweeds, beggar-ticks (*Bidens* spp.), grasses, and much

more. The meadow grades into an emergent wetland near its northern end. Here the group traveled around the edges of a dense wool grass, *Scirpus cyperinus* dominated wetland. While amongst the wool grass, a rare Dion skipper butterfly was observed. Wool grass is one of the host plants for the skipper.



Southern Plains Bumblebee

Many other invertebrates were observed in the meadow, including sleepy orange and cloudless sulphurs, monarchs, Carolina mantis, an *Amorpha* borer beetle, dark flower scarab beetles, and the rare southern plains bumblebee. This bumblebee has been lost through much of its range.

Since taking this field out of agriculture in 2015, it has grown into a rich assemblage of meadow and wetland plants and has created a habitat for many common and uncommon animal species.



When Are Dues Due?

All membership dues are due on January 1, including those who joined during the year up to and including June 30. If you joined on or after July 1, you receive the partial year free, then need to re-new annually by the following January 1st.

To make payment go to www.TNPS.org. Click on "Membership" on the bottom left side of any page and follow the directions for either printing a form and mailing it with a check OR use the online form.

Once the online form is completed, you will be taken to the PayPal page for payment with either a credit card or by your PayPal account. UNTIL PAYMENT IS MADE VIA CHECK OR PAYPAL YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER AND WILL NOT RECEIVE NEWSLETTERS.

If your address has changed, please email your new address to info@TNPS.org.

We do not print the newsletter in full color, but you may be pleased to find all the color in email copies and at our website on the Newsletter page.

Wanted: Education Outreach Coordinator for Nashville Area

To align with our major cities, we now have four coordinator positions with three of them filled. But we need one more volunteer. The Nashville area is very busy with activities and events for outdoor and/or plant-oriented folks, so this is an easy and fun volunteer position. Plus, there are lots of TNPS members who are accustomed to assisting at events. Will you be the one to step up and take the lead?

Not only do we have lots of public events where we set up a table or booth, but we are beginning to field requests from schools and scouting groups who want to start native plant gardens and need a little guidance. Would you enjoy encouraging a new generation to recognize and enjoy our native plants?

If your answer is yes to either or both questions, contact Karen at info@tnps.org.

TNPS Newsletter
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