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www.scnps.org

UPSTATE happenings

APRIL 2010

Saturday, March 27

Field Trip: 40-acre Rock, Lancaster County

The Piedmont Chapter, along with the Museum of York County and the NC Native Plant Society, invites us to join them at 40-acre Rock. The rock is actually 14 acres; the entire Forty Acre Rock Heritage Preserve 2,267 acres. This varied landscape includes granitic flatrocks, waterslides, waterfalls, beaver pond, caves, hardwood and pine forests, and a variety of wildflowers and wildlife. Hike is approx 5 miles; difficulty is moderate with areas where footing may be uncertain. Trip leaders are Dr. Larry Mellichamp (UNCC) and Dr. George Sawyer (Coker College & Kalmia Gardens).

SC & NC Native Plant Society Members are free; Culture & Heritage Museum Members are free. Non-members: \$5

To reserve your spot call 803-329-2121 or email ncrane@chmuseums.org. More details will be sent upon registration, or you can query Mary Morrison at 803-329-6990.

Saturday, April 10, 9:00-1:00

NATIVE PLANT plant sale!

New location!!! Greenville Tec's McAlister Square Campus parking lot at the Antrim Drive entrance, in Greenville (225 South Pleasantburg Drive, then look for the signs).

Local fauna and flora exist in an intertwined web — some animals feed exclusively on a narrow range of native plants, while many insects are important pollinators that also serve as food sources for birds and other animals.

And when native plants are sited correctly they have the advantage of having adapted over 1000s of years to local soil types, pests, and climate. Experts will help you choose the right plant for the right place, increasing your chances of success while reducing your consumption of water, fertilizers, and pesticides.

Dr. Jan Haldeman of Erskine College will display and discuss commonly sold non-native species that are invasive in our region.

We need volunteers both before and during the sale. You can help set up (especially Friday morning), put on labels, move plants, guide buyers, remove labels, or load plants. Your participation helps make the sale a success. Sign up at the meeting, or contact Susan Lochridge at 288-5590 or needlespirits@charter.net

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Discovering American Azaleas!

Native azaleas are among our most beautiful and colorful wildflowers — a delightful gift of Nature. Whether you set out on a hike to enjoy the outdoors in general, to see all kinds of wildflowers, or especially to find wild azaleas, the sight of these delicate pink, white or orange flowers is most certainly a highlight of any outdoor expedition.

If you want to be able to enjoy American azaleas even when you don't go hiking, consider planting some in your own yard. Although they are not used in home landscapes as much as they should be, American azaleas do very well in gardens. Once established, they are surprisingly drought-tolerant as well as quite disease and pest resistant.

Native azaleas are not sold as widely as exotics, but they are available. [They are always featured at the Native Plant Society's annual spring Native Plant Sale!] Many types and colors — including some not seen in nature — can also be found at nurseries specializing in native plants. Depending on your gardening skills and interests, you can grow your own by starting azaleas from cuttings. And, if you learn the appropriate technique, you can successfully transplant even large azaleas from plant rescue sites.

Upstate South Carolina's Nick Anastos has been enjoying and studying American azaleas for 25 years. He hunts for them in the woods and finds natural hybrids or creates new hybrids of his own; the most successful of these he introduces to the nursery trade. In his program "Discovering American Azaleas," Nick plans to show photos of beautiful plants he has discovered or hybridized — and he will also allow us to meet them "in person" by bringing branches cut from some of the early bloomers.

Nick will share descriptions of both his azalea discovery trips and his successful azalea hybridization and growing procedures. He will explain how he goes about searching for new azaleas in the Carolinas and Georgia, where most American azaleas grow wild, and tell us about some of his exciting finds. And he will take us through the

... continued on page 2

Nick Anastos

Tuesday, April 20, 7:00 pm

Greenville Tec @ McAlister Square, 225 S. Pleasantburg Drive, Greenville

For a map and more information, visit http://www.scnps.org/activities_ups.html

Plant something
for us this year!

**NATIVE PLANT
plant sale!**

9:00am-1:00pm

Discovering American Azaleas!

... continued from page 1

hybridization process from start to finish, including the process of growing and evaluating the new plants.

Finally, Nick promises to explain how to successfully rescue and transplant even large azaleas — a technique that he describes as vital to saving these plants, but not for the faint of heart!

Nick Anastos was active in the Rhododendron Society and had been growing rhododendrons for a number of years when he became acquainted with Clarence Towe, author of the book *American Azaleas*. It was Clarence who introduced Nick to the wonders of native azaleas.

Nick began to go on azalea hunts with Clarence and says he learned an enormous amount from him. He has added to that knowledge through his own efforts and through his association with other individuals who also love these

beautiful plants. Although Nick continues to grow some rhododendrons, he has become an authority on American azaleas in his own right. — Amy Fendley



Our native *Vacciniums* (Blueberries, Deerberries, Sparkleberries, etc) are a rich source of food for numerous moths, butterflies, and other wildlife.



Florida Azalea (*Rhododendron austrinum*) is early to bloom (March-April) and easy to grow, making it one of North America's most popular species. The fragrant goldish-orange flowers usually have red tubes.



At least 12 butterfly species depend on Milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.), the Monarch butterfly (pictured on page 3) being our best-known.

Itching to get outside, but not sure where to go?

Try The Nature Conservancy's

Blue Wall Preserve

Tucked away in the northeast section of Greenville County, in an area sometimes referred to as the Dark Corner, lies the Blue Wall Preserve, one of the best kept secrets in the Upstate.

Given all that the BWP has to offer the hiker — mountain vistas, water, wildlife, interesting flora — I am surprised it has remained somewhat a secret, though I am not complaining. After hiking here for three plus years in solitude, maybe it's time to let others explore this hidden botanical wonderland.

Acquired in 1997 by The Nature Conservancy, this 500-acre natural area is the northernmost piece of protected land in the Blue Ridge Escarpment of South Carolina. With a picturesque view of nearby Hogback Mountain and two crystal-clear ponds, the BWP is a nature lover's paradise that you will love exploring.

Beginning at the parking area, you'll head west, whereupon you will find a kiosk with information about the preserve and the 2.5-mile trail that runs

through it. Here you will find a list of over 124 bird species known to visit the area. When I first hiked the BWP several years ago there was a botanical list here too, but it became weathered and torn and has been removed. Maybe a new plant list could be created by interested SCNPS members!

The trail that winds its way through the preserve is a section of the Palmetto Trail known as the Blue Wall Passage. About a half mile along the gently ascending trail you will arrive at the first pond. (A short spur trail to the left will take you to a waterfall.)

Continue on the main trail about three quarters mile to the second pond (here there is a loop trail around the pond). Turn left (the pond will be to your right) and continue across the dam: You will be on the main section of trail, headed toward Vaughn's Gap.

A few hundred yards after leaving the pond area you begin to enter a cove forest of mature hardwoods and large boulders. A bold stream will be

to your right as you travel deeper into the forest. The trail will begin to ascend steeply after crossing a stream; now you are in the heart of the preserve, surrounded by old growth forest. To reach Vaughn's Gap, at the end of the preserve, is a fairly strenuous 50-minute hike.

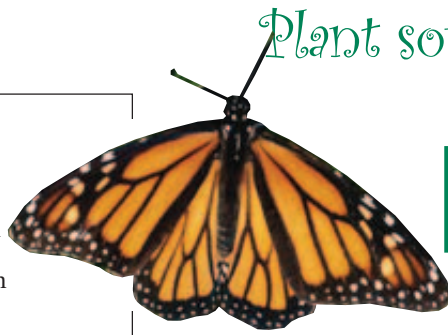
Some noteworthy plants I have found are Sweet Betsy Trillium (*Trillium cuneatum*), Showy Orchis (*Orchis spectabilis*), Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), Cutleaf Toothwort (*Cardamine concatenata*), Trout Lily (*Erythronium umbilicatum*), Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Sweet Birch (*Betula lenta*) and many others. Enjoy! — Joe Townsend

Joe will be speaking about wildflowers at the Liberty branch library of Pickens County on Monday, March 22, from 4:00-5:30.

Directions to BWP: From the intersection of Hwy 14 & Hwy 176 in downtown Landrum, travel about 2 miles north on 176. Look left for the entrance to Lake Lanier on Lakeshore Dr. Go over the bridge and follow West Lakeshore Dr around the lake until you come to Dug Hill Rd. The entrance to Blue Wall Preserve will be on your left.

Plant something
for us this year!

Sweet Azalea (*Rhododendron arborescens*) blooms from May through August. It grows wild along fast-moving streams and damp mountaintops from Alabama to Pennsylvania, and has fragrant white flowers with red pistils and filaments.



NATIVE PLANT plant sale!

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Native plants also have the advantage of having adapted over 1000s of years to local soil types, pests, and climate conditions.

**Saturday,
April 10**

9:00am-1:00pm

Greenville Tec's McAlister Square Campus parking lot at the Antrim Drive entrance (225 South Pleasantburg Dr, then look for the signs).

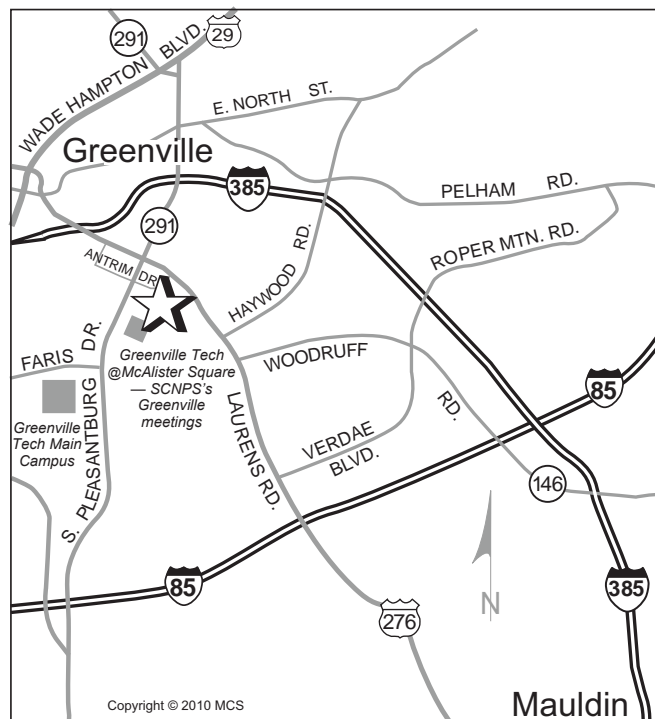
For more information, call 864-288-5590 or visit www.scnps.org



Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) serves as a host plant to 18 species of Lepidoptera.



Virginia Sweetspire (*Itea virginica*) can provide invaluable erosion control along a creek.



**NEW
LOCATION!**



**South Carolina
Native Plant Society
PO Box 491
Norris, SC 29667**

Upstate Chapter

Address Service Requested.

Non-profit Organization U.S. Postage PAID CLEMSON, SC 29631 PERMIT NO. 7
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Upcoming Events ... continued from page 1.

Saturday, April 17 Field Trip: Ninety Six National Historic Site, Greenwood County

Join Rusty Wilson, Master Naturalist and NPS member, on an outing to one of his favorite places, "a Piedmont jewel." Some plants we'll see include *Cardamine bulbosa* (bulbous bittercress), *Fraseri caroliniensis* (columbo), and possibly a *Matelea* species (anglepod or milkvine). We will probably walk 4 miles or so and will be off-trail on uneven terrain for much of the walk: into the floodplain, across a creek, and onto a north-facing bluff overlooking the creek. Bring good walking shoes and be prepared to get your feet wet!

Bring lunch, snack, and a drink.

If you plan to meet us at the site, be there by 9:45 am. From Greenville drive south on Rt 25 to Hodges. Look for a traffic light with a Fred's on its right. Turn left there, drive a mile or so to a four-way stop where there is a sign that says "Ninety Six — 16 miles." From there travel on Hwy 246 to traffic light in Old Ninety Six. Then go straight (Hwy248) for two miles. You'll see the Visitor's Center of Ninety Six Historic site on your left. Rusty will meet us in the parking lot.

Those that wish to carpool from the Greenville area will leave from Home Depot on South Pleasantburg Dr at 8:30 am. From there we can hop directly onto Hwy 25 towards Greenwood and Ninety Six.

To register, call Janine McCreery at 864-238-3253 and tell her your name, phone number, email address, and which outing. Limited to 20 participants. Preference given to paid-up NPS members.

Saturday, April 17, 10:00 am Field Trip: Leigh Fibers Nature Trail, Spartanburg County

Check out the possible state champion holly! with Lamar Nelson, who has established this pleasant area near Wellford. An easy walk.

Register by emailing Eva Pratt — evaoncompton@gmail.com — and tell her

your name, phone number, email address, and which outing. She will respond with directions to the meeting site.

Tuesday, April 20, 10:00-2:00 Earth Fest

Celebrate the 40th anniversary of Earth Day! If you can help staff our booth at Greenville Tech's Earth Fest, please contact Cathy Foster (catreas@charter.net). Greenville Tech's Main Campus, 1620 S. Pleasantburg Dr, Greenville.

Saturday, April 24, 11:00-3:00 Annual Friends Day at Paris Mountain State Park

NPS will have a display table at this event, which showcases conservation, good resource management, and environmental education. Volunteers? Contact Cathy Foster (catreas@charter.net).

Tuesday, April 20, 7:00 pm Discovering American Azaleas *See story page 1.*

Wednesday, April 21 Field Trip with local naturalist Dennis Chastain in northern Pickens County

We will explore a rich cove near Wild Hog Branch in Jocassee Gorges.

To register, call Janine McCreery at 864-238-3253 and tell her your name, phone number, email address, and which outing. Limited to 20 participants. Preference given to paid-up NPS members.

We will meet at Holly Springs Country Store at the junction of Rts 11 and 178 in the upper parking lot at 9:00 am and drive fifteen minutes from there to the site. Folks from Greenville wanting to carpool can meet at the Publix parking lot adjacent to McDonalds, in University Square Shopping Center near the intersection of Hwy 276 & Old Buncombe Rd, in time to leave there at 8:15 am. Bring lunch and a drink.

May 7-8-9 12th Annual Statewide Symposium

NATURE
It's our turn

Magnolia Plantation & Gardens Charleston, SC

Come enjoy a delightful and insightful weekend along the banks of the beautiful Ashley River. Our guest lecturer, co-sponsored by the Charleston Parks Conservancy, will be Doug Tallamy, author of the book *Bringing Nature Home*. Doug will talk about his common-sense approach to why we should be using natives. He'll also guide a butterfly walk during our broad array of afternoon programs. We will end the weekend with several field trip options, both structured and not: Francis Beidler Forest, tranquil Mepkin Abbey, historic Hampton Park, a few heritage preserves, Magnolia Plantation and more. For more information, go to www.scnps.org/symposium.html

Tuesday, May 18, 7:00 pm Cast in Stone — Ancient Plants

Christian Cicimurri, Curator of Education at Clemson's Bob Campbell Geology Museum, will bring a collection of plant fossils and discuss ancient plants. Founders Hall, Southern Wesleyan University, Central.

Saturday, May 22, 10:00 am Woodruff School District Cross-Country Trail, in Spartanburg County

See the northern-most population of the sweet-smelling May White Azalea (*Rhododendron eastmanii*) in bloom, and more, guided by Newberry College's Dr Charles Horn. Register by emailing Eva Pratt — evaoncompton@gmail.com — and tell her your name, phone number, email address, and which outing. She will respond with directions to the meeting site.