



57TH ANNUAL SPRING WILDFLOWER PILGRIMAGE

MAY 1-3, 2026

CLAYTON, RABUN COUNTY, GEORGIA

The 2026 Pilgrimage will be held May 1-3 in Clayton, Georgia, the site of the Society's very first pilgrimage. This location was selected by BotSoc members in order to honor the Society's 100th anniversary, which falls in 2026. You are cordially invited to attend the Georgia Botanical Society's 57th Annual Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage May 1-3, 2026 to be headquartered in Clayton, GA with field trips nearby and in adjoining areas including the Carolinas. We had our 2012 and 2019 Pilgrimages in Clayton.

The pilgrimage will consist of a Friday night social with light hors d'oeuvres, a Saturday banquet with a special program and more great food. And as usual, there will be our terrific field trips to some very special places located in the region. On this centennial anniversary there will also be a special program with our Friday night social.

PILGRIMAGE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, MAY 1

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| 8:00 am - 5:00 pm | Field trips will meet at various times and places. Please consult the description for your particular trip. |
| 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm | Registration and T-shirt pickup at the Friday Social. |
| 6:30 pm - 7:00 pm | Evening Program - "GA BotSoc Through the Years - Reminiscence" at the Rabun County Civic Center, Clayton, GA |

SATURDAY, MAY 2

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| 7:00 am - 7:30 am | Early registration at the Quality Inn hotel |
| 8:00 am - 5:00 pm | Field trips will meet at various times and places. Please consult the description for your particular trip. |
| 5:30 pm | Doors open for banquet gathering at the Dillard House, Dillard GA |
| 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm | Dinner |
| 7:45 pm - 9:00 pm | Evening Program |

SUNDAY, MAY 3

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| 8:00 am | Field trips assemble at designated locations. |
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Clayton is situated in the Blue Ridge Mountains of northeast Georgia where our state meets both Carolinas. The Sumter National Forest is to the east, the Nantahala National Forest is to the north, and the Chattahoochee National Forest is all around Clayton. Clayton is the county seat for Rabun County, founded in 1819 from land formerly inhabited by the Cherokee and named for Governor William Rabun.

Nestled in the extreme northeastern corner of Georgia, the 377 square miles of Rabun County comprise only 5% of our state's part of the Blue Ridge Physiographic Province. Sixty percent of the county is in public lands under the management of the US Forest Service or the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. This beautiful mosaic of scenic valleys, high rugged mountains, clear streams, and lush forests is attractive year round, but offers a special floristic bounty each spring.

General Information

As detailed on page 3, our main motel, Quality Inn & Suites Mt. Chalet (834 Hwy 441, Clayton, GA 30525), is located 1.3 Miles south of the Rabun County Civic Center (201 W Savannah St, Clayton, GA 30525) – where our Friday Social will be centered. The Saturday evening activities will be located at the Dillard House (768 Franklin St. Dillard, GA 30537).

There are a couple of alternate lodgings set up this year. Days Inn (54 Hwy 441 North Clayton, GA, is located 1/2 mile east on US 441 for budget conscious. The Dillard house will also have a small block of rooms at a discounted rate if you prefer to stay close to the Saturday banquet location (768 Franklin St. Dillard, GA 30537). For those who want to spurge and treat themselves we also have a few rooms blocked at the Bridge Creek Inn (60 S Main St. Clayton, GA 30525).

Remember, hotel reservations are separate from pilgrimage registration and must be made directly with the hotel itself.

Expecting a large crowd, Rich Reaves has planned a total of 28 field trips for the 2026 Clayton-centered event. We encourage you to review all of the material in the brochure, to choose those field trips of interest, and then submit your registration form.

The [online registration form](https://www.gabotsoc.org/pilgrimage/) can be found at <https://www.gabotsoc.org/pilgrimage/> The registration form includes the registration for the Pilgrimage, the field trips, and the banquet. The field trip registration section has been upgraded to account for trip capacity. Each trip will be available for sign up until it is full.

T-shirt orders are separate from online registration; see page 5. We are trying a new system this year that allows us to take pre-orders before they make the shirts. When you order, you can choose to have the t-shirts shipped to you prior to the event (shipping is extra) or to pick up in person at the Friday Social.

For any Pilgrimage questions, please email Mei Lee Fung (gabotsoc.meilee@gmail.com) with your questions and provide a phone number so she can call you back.

Lodging	Address	Booking Instructions	Rate	Book by
Quality Inn* 762-799-8005	834 US-441 Clayton, GA 30525	Book via website	No guaranteed rates. Breakfast included	
Dillard House 800-541-0671	768 Franklin St Dillard, GA 30537	Luxury Double Queen Highlands The Dillard House Group ID: BKG485 Group Password: 13326573	\$159/night for double occupancy. Each person beyond two is \$25/ person extra.	4/2/26
Days Inn 706-801-4051	54 US-441 N Clayton, GA 30525	Booking code GABOTSOC073025	\$78/night for double occupancy. Breakfast included	3/30/26
Bridge Creek Inn 706-960-4300	60 S Main St Clayton, GA 30525	Request GA Botanical Society event rate	\$239+/night Breakfast box included.	3/30/26

* This will be our Pilgrimage HQ; rates quoted vary by room size. The rates are extended for two days prior and after the event dates. The rates quoted vary by room size. Rates good until date shown.

There are also camping opportunities at Black Rock Mountain State Park (800) 864-7275 for those who may be interested in that option. Note that the park itself is seasonally closed until mid-March so use the 800 number for inquiries on reservations. Those who plan to stay there need to consider the distance, and especially driving time, from Clayton.



1971 BotSoc newsletter clipping about the first Pilgrimage in Clayton, GA and a photo from that first Pilgrimage.

**GEORGIA BOTANICAL SOCIETY
FIELD TRIPS**

**April 17 Saturday 12:30 p.m.
Turkey Trot Farm, Forsyth Co.**

Leaders: — Angie Hinrichs and Steve Bowling. Emphasis: — Early spring wildflowers. Meet at the intersection of highways 141 and 120. We will carpool at this point. The farm is about 4 miles north of there. There will be three different walks for different ecologies of plants and abilities of hikers.

**May 1 and 2 Saturday and Sunday
Wildflower Pilgrimage, Rabun Co.**

Leader: Marie Mellinger. Mark these dates on your calendar. There will be three different walks on both days, with a dinner Saturday night followed by slides taken by Bill Collins. Sunday's trips will terminate at Black Rock State Park with a wiener roast. For details contact: Mrs. L. K. Emerson, 2350 Palmour Dr., Apt. C2, Atlanta, Ga. 30305, Telephone 261-1828.

Saturday Evening Program

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The Saturday Pilgrimage Evening Program will be held in The Straiton Room at [The Dillard House](#) located at 768 Franklin Street, Dillard GA, 30537 ([location and directions](#)). A Regional Buffet dinner will be served at 6:00 pm with selections prepared by The Dillard House chef. The menu features Southern buttermilk fried chicken and roast pork loin, with marinated grilled tofu available as a vegetarian alternative. Accompaniments include yeast rolls, a seasonal salad, coleslaw, fried okra, green beans (prepared without meat), creamed corn, and a seasonal fruit cobbler for dessert. Coffee, Iced Tea, and water will be included. Coffee service and cookies will also be available during the speaker presentation on this evening.

The topic of our evening program is “**Tools for Learning Georgia’s Diverse Flora**” by Alan S. Weakley.

Georgia has the most diverse native flora in the Southeastern United States! We are still learning a lot about the plants of Georgia, with new species discovered and described, new distribution records of native species, additional non-native species becoming naturalized (and in some cases invasive), better understanding of habitats, and more. At the Southeastern Flora Project, we’re synthesizing that information, developing better identification tools, and providing “a 21st century flora” to help people understand the natural world around them. We’ll explore the diversity of the Southeastern flora, the foundations for that diversity, and the processes of real change in the flora and change in our understanding and classification of that flora. We’ll also discuss the complementary values of different “knowledge repositories” and information sources about the plants of Georgia: herbaria, iNaturalist and other machine-learning apps, printed floras, wildflower guides, flora apps, websites, databases, and data compilations. How can we best learn, appreciate, and conserve Georgia’s rich natural heritage?

Alan S. Weakley is a renowned American botanist, plant taxonomist, community ecologist, biogeographer, and conservation biologist specializing in the flora and vegetation of the Southeastern United States. He serves as Director of the [University of North Carolina Herbarium](#) (part of the North Carolina Botanical Garden), overseeing a collection of over 800,000 specimens, and as Adjunct Professor in the Department of Biology at UNC-Chapel Hill, where he mentors students in plant systematics and conservation.

Weakley earned his B.A. with highest honors in Botany and Comparative Literature from UNC-Chapel Hill (1978) and his Ph.D. from Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment (2005).

His influential works include authoring the [Flora of the Southeastern United States](#) (a standard reference covering more than ~11,000 taxa), co-authoring the award-winning Flora of Virginia (recipient of the Thomas Jefferson Award for Conservation), and contributing to the Flora of North America. He has advanced conservation through roles at The Nature Conservancy, NatureServe, and the Carolina Vegetation Survey, with research on biodiversity hotspots, rare species, and community classification. His publications have garnered over 7,300 citations. Alan is currently leading a project to complete an enhanced version of the Flora of the Southeastern United States, served on multiple platforms, including a web app, pdfs, and five installable flora apps, FloraQuest, covering the 25-state region.



Please join us for the Friday Night Social on Friday, May 1st from 6 PM to 8 PM in the Ballroom at the Rabun County Civic Center. The Rabun County Civic Center is located at 25 Courthouse Square, Clayton, GA 30525.

A registration table will be available to get your name tag, registration materials and t-shirts if you chose to pick up at the Pilgrimage.

A special evening program is planned for this year Friday Social: we will be joined by Steve Bowling, the GA BotSoc member with the longest tenure. Steve was inducted into the Society at 12 years old and will be reminiscing on the early years of the Society, its founder, and a general walk through memory lane.

Please let us know if you are interested in seeds/plant swapping, book exchange, and if you can bring light hors d'oeuvres or soft drinks for the Friday social.

For information and volunteering opportunities for the Friday Social please contact this year's Friday Social Chair Paul Murray at Paul.Murray2@atkinsrealis.com

BotSoc Pilgrimage T-shirts

We will have t-shirts and sweatshirts for sale once again, with a unique design for the 2026 Pilgrimage. All profits from the sales of the t-shirts are designated for the Marie Mellinger Field Botany Research Grant Fund. This is a special "limited edition" shirt. T-shirts will be ordered separately from registration, and you may choose to have the shirt mailed (shipping is extra) or delivered to the Pilgrimage. Prices, styles, and sizes are as follows:



Short sleeve T shirt (unisex)
Color - Berry
sizes S, M, L, XL are \$22.00
size XXL is \$25.00
size XXXL is \$26.00



Long sleeve T shirt (unisex)
Color - Mustard
sizes S, M, L, XL are \$30.00
size XXL is \$31.00
size XXXL is 33.00



Long sleeve Sweatshirt (unisex)
Color - Yellow Haze
sizes S, M, L, XL are \$28.00
size XXL is \$31.00
size XXXL is 32.00

Link for t-shirt orders: https://stores.inksoft.com/georgia_botanical_society_pre-s/shop/home

Field Trips At A Glance

Fri AM	Fri PM	Sat AM	Sat PM	Sun AM
1. Tennessee Rock Trail (Black Rock Mountain SP)		9. Scaly Mountain		19. Panther Creek
2. NC Roadside & Buck Creek		10. Tennessee Rock Trail (Black Rock Mountain SP)		20. Buckeye Creek Trail
	3. Dickinson Branch Pine Barrens	11. Tallulah Gorge SP		21. Rabun Bald (from Beegum Gap)
4. Scaly Mountain		12. Buck Creek		22. Warwoman Bog
5. Panther Creek		13. Tate City Walkabout		23. Till Ridge Cove
6. Hemlock Falls (Moccasin Creek SP)			14. Dickinson Branch Pine Barrens	24. Tennessee Rock Trail
7. Warwoman Dell		15. Till Ridge Cove	16. Hambridge Center	25. Buck Creek
8. Broad River Trail/Lake Russell WMA		17. Hemlock Falls		26. Dickinson Branch Pine Barrens
		18. Roadside Botanizing and Till Ridge Cove		27. Hemlock Falls
				28. Large Whorled Pogonia & Others



Please note carefully the meet time and location for each field trip and the amount of time it will take to get there from where you are. If you have questions, please reach out to the trip leader in advance as cell service is not always reliable in the mountains.

What to Bring:

As with all BotSoc field trips, please bring enough water for your whole trip, also lunch or snacks, as appropriate. Bug spray, camera, hand lens, binoculars, field guides, comfortable shoes, and sunscreen are suggested. A hiking pole is recommended for any trip rated as strenuous. You may also wish to bring a jacket or rain gear, depending on the weather.



Trip 1: Tennessee Rock Trail

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- Date:** Friday full day, 9 am to 4 pm (Note: **Limit** is 20)
- Location:** Meet at the trailhead at Black Rock Mountain State Park. Directions: From Clayton, drive 3 mi north on US 441 to Mountain City. Turn left on Black Rock Mountain Pkwy (brown directional signs in Mountain City.) Trailhead is 0.5 mi before Visitor Center. (34.907225, -83.412111)
- Description:** The Tennessee Rock Trail is a 2.2-mile loop trail profiled in Hugh and Carol Nourse's book, *Favorite Wildflower Walks in Georgia*. Flowers likely to be observed include multiple Trilliums, mayapple, cucumber root, azaleas, rosebay rhododendron, poke milkweed, and others. Difficulty: Moderate due to elevation changes and uneven footing. Includes a 440 ft climb. Part of trail is along ridgeline and steeply downhill on both sides.
- Bring: Lunch to eat during walk, snacks, water, raingear, insect repellent, sturdy footwear, trekking poles. Plus \$5 or State Park Annual Pass.
- Leader:** Lee Echols 706-338-2157
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Trip 2: NC Roadside& Buck Creek

- Date:** Friday full day, 10 am to 4 pm (Note: **Limit** is 20)
- Location:** East end of the Lowe's parking lot at Franklin Plaza, Franklin, NC (35.165394, -83.394085, WGS 84 datum). From Clayton, take US 441 north approximately 20.5 miles from the intersection with US 76 West to Franklin, NC. Turn left into Franklin Plaza and proceed to the Lowe's parking lot. Franklin Plaza is the intersection immediately south of the ramps to and from US 64.
- Description:** We will make multiple stops to view wildflowers including *Castilleja coccinea*, *Cubelium concolor*, *Geranium maculatum*, *Hexastylis species 2*, *Isotrema macrophylla*, *Maianthemum canadense*, *Packera aurea*, *Packera serpenticola*, *Pedicularis canadensis*, *Polygaloides pauciflora*, *Trillidium undulatum*, *Trillium erectum*, *Trillium grandiflorum*, *Vicia caroliniana*, and *Viola glaberrima*. Difficulty: Easy (some optional walks off road will be moderate).
- Bring: Water, lunch, raingear, insect repellent, sturdy footwear, trekking poles. A high-visibility vest or shirt is recommended due to walking along major roadway.
- Leader:** Rich Reaves 770-827-5186 rich.reaves@att.net
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Trip 3: Dickinson Branch Pine Barrens (Popcorn Overlook)

- Date:** Friday half day, 12 pm to 4 pm (Note: **Limit** is 20)
- Location:** From Main St. in Clayton, go west toward Hiawassee on U.S. 76/GA Hwy 2/Lookout Mountain Scenic Hwy ~12 miles. The overlook where we will meet is on the right (34.874843, -83.574547).
- Description:** This trip will highlight the ecology of Georgia's best Appalachian serpentine woodland, an area that is fascinating to ecologists because of its unusual bedrock. Ninebark and teaberry are two unusual plants found here, and pitch pines and stunted blackjack oaks grow above a dense, grassy groundcover strewn with gray-green boulders laced with lichen. Dry-site spring flowers and rattlesnake master will be present in this rare habitat. We will also see the remains of the H. V. M. Miller Asbestos Mining operation from the late 1800s. Difficulty: Moderately easy but no formal trail.
- Bring: Water, snacks, sturdy footwear & rain protection, camera, binoculars, hand lens.
- Leader:** Bruce Roberts 404-368-7664
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Trip 4: Scaly Mountain

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- Date:** Friday full day, 8:30 to 4:30 (Note: **Limit** is 15 and carpooling is required)
- Location:** Osage Overlook Parking Area, NC Route 106; Directions: Take Hwy 441N to Dillard then turn right on Hwy 246, which will become NC 106 at the state line. This road crosses the state line a few times along the way. Park at the Osage Overlook on the right (signs for Bartram Trail crossing). 35.028968, -83.28203
- Description:** Scaly Mountain, NC is just outside of GA with spectacular views of both states. The ascent up this diverse portion of the Bartram Trail will take you through a multitude of high elevation plant communities brimming with oaks and wildflowers. The rocky summits are expansive with numerous seepages that support Biltmore sedge (*Carex biltmoreana*), bog goldenrod (*Solidago uliginosa*), and kidney-leaved grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia asarifolia*). This is considered a moderate hike with steep terrain, 1,140 foot elevation gain.
- Bring: Water, lunch, snacks, insect repellent, trekking poles, sturdy footwear, rain protection, hand lens, personal medication, e.g epi-pen.
- Leader:** Clayton Webster webs4740@bellsouth.net 678-925-1091
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Trip 5: Panther Creek

- Date:** Friday full day, 11 am to 4 pm (Note: **Limit** is 10)
- Location:** Meet the trip leader at the trailhead. Directions from Atlanta: Traveling north from Gainesville on I-985 then US 23/US 441, watch for the Talmadge Rd. stoplight (Exxon on left) then measure 2.3 miles to the junction with Tom Born Rd. (Chevron on left). Turn left on Tom Born Rd., then just past the Chevron (0.1 mi) turn right on Old Historic US 441. Travel north 1.8 miles on Old Historic US 441 to the Panther Creek trailhead with roadside parking on the right, and more parking by turning left into the Panther Creek Recreation Area on the left if the roadside is full.
- Description:** This trip will focus on sharing techniques for observing lichens and plants (and everything) on iNaturalist. We should examine species in hemlock-white pine forest and hardwood forest dominated by yellow poplar and oaks. There will be common spring wildflowers. This walk is considered moderate, 2-3 miles maximum.
- Bring: Water, snacks/lunch, hand lens (loupe), smartphone & clip-on macro lens if you have one, raingear, insect repellent, sturdy footwear, trekking poles.
- Leader:** Malcolm Hodges mhodges1957@gmail.com cell 770-776-9194
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Trip 6: Hemlock Falls at Moccasin Creek SP

- Date:** Friday full day 12pm to 4 pm (Note: **Limit** is 20)
- Location:** Northwest corner of Ingles parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441: 34.880898, -83.395041)
- Description:** This trip follows a trail beside Moccasin Creek to Hemlock Falls. The trail is lush with mountain shrubs like rhododendron, mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), and doghobble (*Leucothoe fontanesiana*) and groundcovers like Christmas fern, partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*), foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*), ginger (*Hexastylis*), and galax. We'll see other spring flowering plants like violets, trillium, Robin's plantain (*Erigeron pulchellus*), pussytoes (*Antennaria*) and more. The trail can be narrow at times and roots and rocks are present, so this hike is considered moderate but has no strenuous climbs; the in-and-out total trip is 2.4 miles.
- Bring: Water, snacks, raingear, insect repellent, sturdy footwear, trekking poles. Plus \$5 or State Park Annual Pass.
- Leader:** John French 678-575-1655
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Trip 7: Warwoman Dell

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Date: Friday half day, 12pm to 4pm (Note: **Limit** is 20) Carpooling may be encouraged from the meet location.

Location: Southwest corner of Ingles parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441: 34.880027, -83.395185)

Description: Short walk to a waterfall through rich woods. Expect to see dolls eye, Vasey's and Catesby's trillium, Jack-in-the-pulpit, foamflower, roundleaf violet leaves (blooms already finished). After the walk to the waterfall, we will likely stop along the gravel road as we leave to look at rosebay rhododendron and other roadside flowers.

This is considered an easy hike but there will be some roots & rocks on the trail.

Bring: Water, snacks, sturdy footwear & rain protection, binoculars, hand lens.

Leader: Ellen Honeycutt 678-576-5667

Trip 8: Broad River Trail, Lake Russell WMA

Date: Friday full day, 10 am to 4 pm (Note: **Limit** is 20)

Location: Meet the trip leader at the trailhead. **Directions:** From I-85: take exit 154 and proceed north on GA 63 for 10.1 miles and continue straight onto GA 184 (GA 63 will make a sharp right at this point). Continue on GA 184 for 5 miles and turn left on Cannon Roads. After 0.3 mile, stay to the right at the fork and continue for 2 miles (Road will become Middle Broad River Road). Turn Right on Sellers Road. Trailhead is 0.8 mile farther on the left. (NOTE: the trailhead is 3.5 miles SOUTH of Clayton.)

Description: A 2-4 mile easy-to-moderate walk on the marked trail. We can expect to see: *Collinsonia verticillata*, *Coreopsis auriculata*, *Salvia urticifolia*, *Styrax grandifolia*, and lots of *Kalmia latifolia* blooming, among others.

Bring: Water, lunch, snacks, raingear, insect repellent, sturdy footwear, trekking poles. No bathroom facilities on trail.

Leader: Linda Chafin 706-548-1697

Trip 9: Scaly Mountain

Date: Saturday full day, 8 am to 4 pm (Note: **Limit** is 10 and carpooling is required)

Location: Osage Overlook Parking Area, NC Route 106 Directions: Take Hwy 441N to Dillard then turn right on Hwy 246, which will become NC 106 at the state line. This road crosses the state line a few times along the way. Park at the Osage Overlook on the right (signs for Bartram Trail crossing). 35.028968, -83.28203

Description: See Trip description of Trip #4

Leader: Hannah Umstead 470-493-4419

Trip 10: Tennessee Rock Trail (Black Rock Mountain State Park)

Date: Saturday full day, 8 am to 3:30 pm (**Limit** is 20)

Location: Meet at the trailhead at Black Rock Mountain State Park. Directions: From Clayton, drive 3 mi north on US 441 to Mountain City. Turn left on Black Rock Mountain Pkwy (brown directional signs in Mountain City.) Trailhead is 0.5 mi before Visitor Center. (34.907225, -83.412111)

Description: See description for Trip #1.

Leader: Lee Echols 706-338-2157

Trip 11: Tallulah Gorge Rim Walk

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- Date:** Saturday full day, 9 am to 4 pm (**Limit** is 20)
- Location:** Jane Hurt Yarn Interpretive Center – at building entrance. **Directions:** From Clayton, drive 11 mi south on US 441 to Jane Hurt Yarn Drive, roughly a half mile north of the Village of Tallulah Falls. Turn left on Jane Hurt Yarn Drive and continue approx. one mile (past campground) to the visitor center. Trailhead is at the visitor center.
- Description:** Walk will take place along portions of the Inspiration Loop and Stoneplace Trails on the north side of Tallulah Gorge. Participants will become acquainted with the vegetation types that encompass much of the park and adjoining wildlife management area, while experiencing spectacular views of Tallulah Gorge. A rich and diverse display of springtime flora will be present, including azaleas, rhododendron, quaker ladies, mayapple, trilliums, various ferns, and others. This walk is considered moderate; while generally level, low gradual inclines (no more than 75 ft elevation change) are apparent along trails. Some uneven footing can be expected, particularly adjacent to Tallulah Gorge. Approximately a 3-mile loop; restrooms at trailhead.
- Bring: Lunch to eat during walk, camera, snacks, water, raingear, insect repellent, sturdy footwear, trekking poles. Also bring \$5 fee or annual State Parks pass.

Leader: Al Schotz ars0002@auburn.edu 205-299-0627 (cell)

Trip 12: Buck Creek (NC)

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- Date:** Saturday full day, 8 am to 3 pm (**Limit** is 20 and carpooling will be recommended)
- Location:** Northwest corner of Ingles parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441, 34.880898, -83.395041)
- Description:** This is an easy to moderate hike. Plants we may see include but are not limited to *Arisaema triphyllum*, *Castilleja coccinea*, *Geranium maculatum*, *Gaultheria procumbens* (last year's fruits), *Hexastylis species 2*, *Isotrema macrophylla*, *Maianthemum canadense*, *Packera serpenticola*, *Pedicularis canadensis*, *Polygaloides pauciflora*, *Trillidium undulatum*, *Trillium grandiflorum*, *Vicia caroliniana*, and *Viola glaberrima*.
- Bring: Water, Lunch, snacks, raingear, insect repellent, sturdy footwear, trekking poles.

Leader: Brandi Griffin 912-339-2632

Trip 13: Tate City Walkabout

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- Date:** Saturday full day, 8am to 4 pm (Limit is 20 and carpooling will be recommended)
- Location:** Southwest corner of Ingles parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441: 34.880027, -83.395185)
- Description:** The morning portion of the walk will be along the highly scenic Coleman river. This USFS trail closely follows the river for 1 mile where it dead ends. The Coleman River is beautiful with many cascades, huge boulders, swirling fast water and home to our native brook trout. Trailside beauty will include showy orchis, rock cap fern, maiden hair fern, cucumber root, Vasey trillium, *Rhododendron minus*, many lichen and mosses.
- The afternoon portion of the hike will require driving a few additional miles to begin the hike to 2 waterfalls on Denton Creek. After lunch at the leader's house, the hike to lower and upper Denton Creek Falls follows a long -abandoned logging road. Many spring ephemerals should be visible from the trail, including several trillium species, dwarf crested iris, cohosh and ferns. The waterfalls are beautiful, lower Denton has a height of 40 feet while Upper Denton is over 50 feet.
- Moderately strenuous – there may be a couple of rock hops. Trails are rugged, mostly unmaintained. Expect muddy spots, uneven footing and some steep sections.
- Bring: Water, lunch, snacks, insect repellent, trekking poles, sturdy footwear, rain protection, hand lens, personal medication, e.g epi-pen.
- Leader:** Eddi Minche 678-313-2582 NOTE: There is no cell service at the walk locations.
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Trip 14: Dickinson Branch Pine Barrens (Popcorn Overlook)

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Date: Saturday half day, 12 pm to 4 pm (Limit is 20)
Location: From Main St. in Clayton, go west toward Hiawassee on U.S. 76/GA Hwy 2/Lookout Mountain Scenic Hwy ~12 miles. The overlook where we will meet is on the right (34.874843, -83.574547).

Description: See Trip #3

Leader: Bruce Roberts 404-368-7664

Trip 15: Till Ridge Cove

Date: Saturday half day, 8 am to 12 pm (Limit is 20)
Location: West edge, middle of Ingles Parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441: 34.880366, -83.395102) Note: Walk will be from Patterson Gap (lat/long 34.969948, -83.477177 – WGS 84)

Description: While the walk will be past the peak *Trillium grandiflorum* bloom, there will be more than 35 taxa either along the route or in the cove. Highlights will include multiple species of Trillium, umbrella leaf, speckled wood lily, and very large canopy specimens of black cherry. This is an easy to moderate, 2.2 miles walk mostly along an old roadbed with a couple of short steep sections.

Bring: Water, snacks, raingear, insect repellent, sturdy footwear, trekking poles.

Leader: Hal Massie 478-957-6095

Trip 16: Marie Mellinger's Legacy (Botany & Creative Arts at The Hambidge Center)

Date: Saturday half day, 1 pm to 4 pm (Limit is 20)
Location: Southwest corner of Ingles parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441: 34.880027, -83.395185) to carpool/caravan and meet at the main Hambidge Center parking area. Trails will be accessed from this location.

Description: Participants will enjoy a group presentation blending botany and the arts to honor Marie Mellinger's life and legacy as local naturalist and resident of Rabun County (1914-2006). Marie was a self-taught naturalist that served as the first non-Atlanta president of the Georgia Botanical Society and authored the Atlas of Vascular Flora of Georgia, along with local guidebooks featuring local and edible plants.

Program leads include Rabun County residents Carrie Radcliffe (Director of Conservation Partnerships, Atlanta Botanical Garden) and Louis Schweizer (Local Botanist and friend of Marie Mellinger), plus Peter Grima (2024 Hambidge Fellow, writer, botanist and forester with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation).

Short hike options will be available before and after the gathering in the Hambidge Commons. These tentatively include the Antinori Trail, Mellinger Trail, and Cove Trail (final selections will be based on floral phenology and trail maintenance schedule).

Bring: water, rain gear, insect repellent, hiking shoes, notebook; poems, other art, memories of Marie Mellinger, or anecdotes to share

Leader: Carrie Radcliffe 706-247-6866 cradcliffe@atlantabg.org

Trip 17: Hemlock Falls, Moccasin Creek SP

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Date: Saturday Half day, 8 am to 12 pm (**Limit** is 20)
Location: Southwest corner of Ingles parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441: 34.880027, -83.395185)

Description: See description for Trip #6

Leader: Ellen Honeycutt 678-576-5667

Trip 18: Roadside Botanizing and Till Ridge Cove

Date: Saturday, all day 9:30 am to 5 pm (**Limit** is 20 and carpooling is recommended)
Location: Northwest corner of Ingles parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441, 34.880898, -83.395041)

Description: We will carpool from the meet location for the morning roadside portion and will have lunch at Patterson Gap between 12:30 and 1 pm. For folks wishing only to do the Till Ridge Cover Portion, be at Patterson Gap by 1 pm. From Clayton, proceed north on US 441 from intersection with US 76 for approx. 6.4 miles to Dillard, GA. Turn left on Bettys Creek Road and continue for approx. 3.3 miles. Turn left on Patterson Gap Road. (If you get to Hambidge Center, you've gone too far) and after approx. 3.7 miles on Patterson Gap Road you will reach the crest of the mountain at Patterson Gap (approximate lat/long 34.969948, -83.477177 – WGS 84). There is parking on both sides of the road.

Roadside portion will look at flowers along forest Service Roads. The walk will be past the peak *Trillium grandiflorum* bloom, but there will be more than 35 taxa either along the route or in the cove. Highlights will include multiple species of *Trillium*, umbrella leaf (*Diphylleia cymosa*), speckled wood lily (*Clintonia umbellulata*), and very large canopy specimens of black cherry (*Prunus serotina*).

Bring: Water, snacks/lunch, raingear, insect repellent, sturdy footwear, trekking poles.

Leader: Rich Reaves 770-827-5186 rich.reaves@att.net



Diphylleia cymosa
USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton,
N.L., and A. Brown. 1913

Trip 19: Panther Creek

Date: Sunday, 8 am to 1 pm (**Limit** is 10)
Location: Walmart Super Center HWY 23/441 on the south side of Clayton (Lat/Long: 34.858310, -83.405117)

Description: See description for trip # 5

Leader: Malcolm Hodges mhodges1957@gmail.com cell 770-776-9194

Trip 20: Buckeye Creek Trail (Otto, NC)

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Date: Sunday full day, 8 am to 3 pm (**Note:** Limit is 10 and carpooling may be required)
Location: Northwest corner of Ingles in Clayton parking lot (176 Hwy 441, 34.880898, -83.395041)

Description: This is 3-mile (round trip), moderately strenuous hike on a trail that is known for its lush wildflowers.
Bring: Lunch to eat during walk, snacks, water, raingear, insect repellent, sturdy footwear, trekking poles.

Leader: John Brower 706-982-9746

Trip 21: Rabun Bald

Date: Sunday full day, 8 am to 3 pm (**Limit** is 10)
Location: Southwest corner of Ingles parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441: 34.880027, -83.395185)

Description: Rabun Bald is the 2nd highest point in Georgia, but quite possibly the best. The 360 degree view includes Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Ravens are often seen soaring playfully above the observation deck, which was constructed from an old fire-tower. A rich cove forest containing a plethora of spring ephemerals surrounds the high, rocky summit. Many trees characteristic of northern forests reach their southern limit here. Umbrella leaf (*Diphylleia cymosa*), false hellebore (*Veratrum viride*), rosy twisted-stalk (*Streptopus roseus*), ground juniper (*Juniperus communis* var. *depressa*), and others. Sneaking around the NE slope of Chestnut Ridge reveals a magnificent seepage cliff donning Canada burnette (*Sanguisorba canadensis*) and wretched sedge (*Carex misera*). We could also see the endangered rock gnome lichen (*Gynoderma lineare*). Participation is limited because of the fragile nature of this habitat.

This is a strenuous walk with steep sections, rocky trail with tree roots. Distance is 7 miles. No facilities.

Bring: Pack lunch to eat at summit, water, snacks, sturdy footwear & rain protection, binoculars, hand lens.

Leader: Tom Diggs 256-599-7461

Trip 22: Warwoman Bog

Date: Sunday half day, 9am to 1 pm (**Limit** is 10 and carpooling will be required)
Location: Northwest corner of Ingles parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441, 34.880898, -83.395041)

Description: We will tour a restored bog that protects multiple rare plant species that have been successfully established in a cooperatively managed site on the Chattahoochee National Forest near Clayton. Swamp pink (*Helonias bullata*) may be in bloom, and we can see the many seedling recruits of this and Purple Mountain Pitcher Plant that have been taking hold as the site has been opened to enhance the habitat for the sun-loving bog denizens. Visitors will be required to sign and honor a secrecy agreement that protects the location of sensitive species and habitat (per Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance guidelines).

We will carpool and/or caravan to the site (~13 miles), travel a very short distance on foot along flat ground, but rubber boots are recommended for the bog itself. This is easy but ground will be wet and soft.

Bring: Water, snacks, raingear, insect repellent, sturdy footwear, much boots, trekking poles for stabilization (if needed)

Leader: Carrie Radcliffe 706-247-6866 cradcliffe@atlantabg.org

Trip 23: Till Ridge Cove

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- Date:** Sunday half day, 8 am to 12 pm (**Limit** is 20)
Location: West edge, middle of Ingles parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441: 34.880366, -83.395102) Note: Walk will be from Patterson Gap (lat/long 34.969948, -83.477177 – WGS 84).
Description: See description for #15
Leader: Hal Massie 478-957-6095
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Trip 24: Tennessee Rock Trail (Black Rock Mountain State)

- Date:** Sunday all day, 8 am to 3:30 pm (**Limit** is 20)
Location: West edge, middle of Ingles Parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441: 34.880366, -83.395102)
Description: See description for Trip #1
Leader: John French 678-575-1655
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Trip 25: Buck Creek & NC Roadsides

- Date:** Sunday all day, 8:30 am to 3 pm (**Limit** is 10)
Location: East end of the Lowe's parking lot at Franklin Plaza, Franklin, NC (35.165394, -83.394085, WGS 84 datum)
Directions: From Clayton, take US 441 north approximately 20.5 miles from the intersection with US 76 West to Franklin, NC. Turn left into Franklin Plaza and proceed to the Lowe's parking lot. Franklin Plaza is the intersection immediately south of the ramps to and from US 64.
Description: We will make multiple stops to view wildflowers including *Castilleja coccinea*, *Cubelium concolor*, *Geranium maculatum*, *Hexastylis* species 2, *Isotrema macrophylla*, *Maianthemum canadense*, *Packera aurea*, *Packera serpenticola*, *Pedicularis canadensis*, *Polygaloides pauciflora*, *Trillidium undulatum*, *Trillium erectum*, *Trillium grandiflorum*, *Vicia caroliniana*, and *Viola glaberrima*. Easy to moderate with a couple of slopes but no difficult footing.
Bring: Water, lunch, snacks, raingear, insect repellent, sturdy footwear, trekking poles.
Leader: Rich Reaves 770-827-5186

Polygaloides pauciflora



Trip 26: Dickinson Branch Pine Barrens

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- Date:** Sunday half day, 8 am to 12 pm (**Limit** is 20)
Location: Popcorn Overlook on US 76 (picnic tables and interpretive signs)
Directions: From Main St. in Clayton, go west toward Hiawassee on U.S. 76/GA Hwy 2/Lookout Mountain Scenic Hwy ~12 miles. The overlook where we will meet is on the right (34.874843, -83.574547).
Description: See description for Trip #3
Leaders: Justin Peterman (770-595-5740) and Claire Jarvis (828-301-8116)
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Trip 27: Hemlock Falls

- Date:** Sunday half day, 8 am to 12 pm (**Limit** is 20)
Location: Southwest corner of Ingles parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441: 34.880027, -83.395185)
Description: See description for Trip #6
Leader: Ellen Honeycutt 678-576-5667
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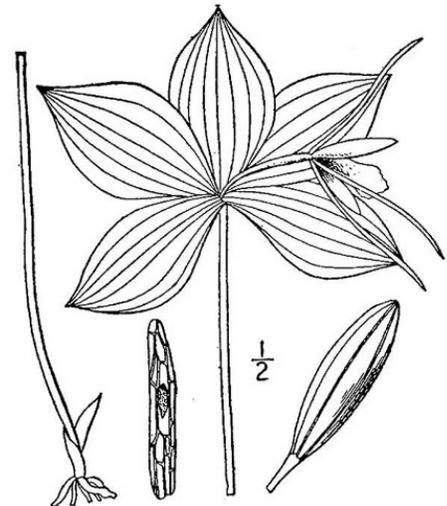
Trip 28: Large Whorled Pogonia & Others

- Date:** Sunday half day, 8:30 am to 12 pm (**Limit** is 20)
Location: Southwest corner of Ingles parking lot in Clayton (176 Hwy 441: 34.880027, -83.395185)

Description: This site may be the best in Georgia to see large whorled pogonia (*Isotria verticillata*) combining over 100 mature plants with easy access. Depending on the weather, we should be arriving at the start of their blooming period. The site also features Catesby's trillium and dozens of pink lady slippers. This site is on private property and can only be visited on this field trip. Easy walking on a gentle slope.

Bring: Water, clothing layers suitable for predicted weather, hand lens, snacks.

- Leader:** Jess Riddle 315-350-1179 and Louis Schweizer



Isotria verticillata
USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database /
Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913



Photos from the archives of early BotSoc field trips. The upper left photo includes Marie Mellinger while the man sitting on the left is Steve Bowling.

