



Fire Ecology Weekend - Field Trip Report

Georgia's biological richness never ceases to amaze.

By Charles Seabrook

On March 21, Georgia Botanical Society members were tromping around in a soil-rich, deciduous mountain forest at the bottom of Cloudland Canyon in Georgia's northwest corner. The early spring wildflowers carpeting the forest floor were breathtaking.

A week later, on March 28, several of us were at the opposite end of the state, in the so-called Red Hills area along the Georgia-Florida border between Thomasville and Tallahassee. There, during a two-day field trip, we strolled through some of the world's most beautiful, biologically diverse ecosystems — old-growth longleaf pine forests where centuries-old pines more than 90 feet tall stand 20 feet apart amid luxuriant growths of rippling wiregrass, other native grasses and scores of herbaceous species. (More than 40 plant species can be found in a 10-foot square of longleaf pine forest.)

The open forests looked more like city parks than wilderness.

Two centuries ago, as much as 90 million acres of this long-leaf pine-grassland system ran nearly intact, 200 miles wide, on the Southern coastal plain. More than 97 percent of it was felled for timber, turpentine and agriculture, and replaced by plantations of faster-growing loblolly and slash pines.

Only remnants of the great ecosystem remain. Luckily, many of the best-preserved, most outstanding tracts were saved by the owners of numerous quail-hunting plantations in the Red Hills area. Quail thrive in longleaf/wiregrass systems.

We visited two of those plantations — Pebble Hill and Greenwood. The latter is particularly known for some 1,000 acres of old-growth pine woods — perhaps the South's finest example of a longleaf pine forest.

On our first day, we were at Pebble Hill where our leader, Kevin Robertson, a scientist at the Tall Timbers Research Station near Tallahassee, explained that if there is one single thing that keeps a longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem healthy and intact, it's fire. Low-intensity "prescribed" fires sweeping through a long-leaf forest every two to three years or so rid it of hardwoods and other competing vegetation. Also, longleaf pines, wiregrass and many other plants native to longleaf forests need exposure to fire in order to sprout and regenerate.

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President's Perspective



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We had a memorable time in Dahlonega at the 46th Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage. Mother Nature did her part providing wonderful weather and wildflowers. Many photos from pilgrimage field trips are available on the Georgia Botanical Society's Facebook page. Check it out to enjoy the plants and the photography. We are returning to the area for our annual meeting on July 25th; it will be held at Lake Winfield Scott (LWS). So if you missed the pilgrimage or even if you were on it, join us in July at LWS. See details on the field trip pages.

There are a bunch of people I want to thank for their work on the pilgrimage. First of all, thanks to the field trip leaders who gave of their time and plant and trail knowledge. Thanks to Hal Massie, Rich Reaves and Linda Chafin for sharing their general knowledge of the whole area. And thanks to Anita and Rich Reaves who have handled pilgrimage registration efficiently for the past 10 years. And thanks to Jenneke Somerville who has designed our unique and artistic t-shirts for as many years. Thanks to our Vice President and meeting planner, Heather Brasell, for meshing the whole pilgrimage together and making it work. And thanks to Ellen Honeycutt, our Newsletter Editor, who prepared the pilgrimage brochure. And to our webmaster, Merrill Morris, and to Mike Christison, who get the pilgrimage brochure loaded quickly on the web site.

I want to remember all the volunteers who worked during the pilgrimage. They helped with registration and manned the tables of books and merchandise, and to Teresa and Richard Ware who sold our journal, *Tipularia*, and who are its editors. Our Marie Mellinger Research Grant recipient, Thomas Peters, did a marvelous informal tabletop presentation on Friday evening. Our guest speakers, Leslie Edwards and Bill Witherspoon gave a great presentation at the Saturday banquet. And thanks to the people at the Lumpkin County Convention and Visitor's bureau who helped tremendously with our hotel, meeting space requirements, and found us a fantastic musical group, The Three Arrows. Thanks to the Arrows, 3 very talented young musicians, for their marvelous music.

Thanks to our Friday night clean-up crew, Joanne and John Romfh, for their good and speedy work. Lastly kudos to the best chocolate cookie baker we know, Joanne Romfh. Everyone loved the cookies.

I do not have an exact count, but it's probably close to 50 people who make the pilgrimage happen. Think about volunteering next year; we'd love to have you as a crew member.

The Board has already decided that we will head to South Georgia for our 47th pilgrimage. It will be south of Tifton and north of the Florida state line. Exact place and dates will be available soon.

Maureen Donohue

Fire Ecology Weekend (Cont'd from page 1)

Robertson led us to several research plots maintained at Pebble Hill by Tall Timbers scientists to learn more about “fire ecology,” such as when is the best time to burn a forest and what are the effects of fire on soil. One of the plots, he pointed out, was burned earlier this year. Others were burned one year, two year and three years ago. By comparing the plots, scientists can better understand the benefits of fire in the long-leaf system

During the afternoon, we visited Tall Timbers to explore its forests and learn about the research there. Its forest land includes a climax beech-magnolia forest adjacent to longleaf pine woods. Biologist Wilson Baker, who led us on a walk through the beech-magnolia woods, explained that fire has been excluded purposefully from the forest to see what happens to plant succession. Research indicates that succession of an upland pine-dominated forest will proceed toward hammock vegetation dominated by southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) and American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) in the absence of fire. A big surprise was our coming upon a huge spruce pine measuring more than 36 inches in diameter....

During our visit to Greenwood Plantation on the second day, Baker led us on another walk through a longleaf pine forest harboring numerous trees several centuries old. Some 4,000 acres of Greenwood’s forest, we learned, will be preserved by a private foundation, including 1,000 acres of perhaps the South’s best example of a healthy, intact, old-growth longleaf pine-grassland system. During our walk, Wilson explained the rich diversity of an old-growth longleaf forest. Some of the plants we encountered included hooded pitcher plant, yellow and purple bladderworts (*Pinguicula* spp.), sundew, rattlesnake master, bracken fern, wiregrass, toothache grass and many more.

But it was only the first week of spring. In a few more weeks, hundreds of more native plant species will be busting out in the longleaf pine forest.



Longleaf Pine needles, bud, and cone; W.D. Brush @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Kip Hall and Beth Grant measure the enormous pine spruce

Broxton Rocks - Field Trip Report

By Heather Brasell and Frankie Snow

The Nature Conservancy's Broxton Rocks Preserve was the South Georgia destination for members of the Georgia Botanical Society in early April. Since the acquisition of this tract in the early 1990s, it has been managed using prescribed burning, selective removal of slash and loblolly pine, and under-planting of longleaf in order to restore the longleaf ecosystem that was the dominant type of natural vegetation historically. However, here the primary feature is the unusual flora associated with extensive sandstone outcroppings of Altamaha grit dating from the late Miocene epoch 12-15 million years ago.

The tract contains several plant species of special concern, 15 species of orchids and two new species: an *Isoetes* sp. (quillwort) and an *Oxalis* sp. which are currently being described. Botanists from Old Dominion University have found triploid (sterile), tetraploid and hexaploids of this new quillwort, but need to find diploid plants before they can definitively name the new species. The oxalis species is interesting in that it flowers before the leaves appear. The well-drained sandy uplands provide good habitat for gopher tortoise and as well as for the federally listed Eastern Indigo snake. The apron on one of the tortoise burrows we visited revealed an Indian pottery sherd of Ocmulgee cordmark (dated 900-1000 years old).

We visited several locations to see plant communities or plants of special interest. Along the edge of Rocky Creek above a small waterfall we saw the shrub American snowbell (*Styrax americanus*) in full flower and the orange-red flowers of crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*) lining the stream. Fragrant Piedmont azalea (*Rhododendron canescens*) populated the slopes of the stream while the yet-to-flower *Rhododendron viscosum* lurked among stream-side vegetation.

On rock ravine faces below the waterfalls, the epiphytic orchid (*Epidendrum magnolia*) intermingled with hairy lip Fern (*Cheilanthes lanosa*) while Christmas lichen (*Cryptothecia rubrocinta*) added a red hue to the rocks.

Trip leader Frankie Snow and Max Medley



Continued on next page

Broxton Rocks (cont'd)

Leaving the ravine, we found *Delphinium carolinianum* just starting its flowering period on horizontal surfaces of the rock while the fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) appeared to be ending its flower period. Also winter grape ferns hid beneath grasses with their fertile, protruding sporangium signaling their presence. Along the edges of these outcrops we were able to see two rare plants at Broxton Rocks, *Penstemon dissectus* and *Marshallia ramosa*. Fewer than 20 populations are known for both.

After a break for lunch we walked the uplands where longleaf pine had recently been planted. Here we observed the light yellow flowers of a hybrid *Baptisia*, a cross between *B. alba* and *B. lanceolata*. In recently controlled burn areas, cinnamon fern and bracken fern carpeted the ground.

We then explored wetlands of Rocky Creek where we found numerous plants of Florida bellwort (*Uvularia floridana*) but few had flowered. Also we encountered a mystery lily just emerging for the season which was once thought to be *Lilium superbum* but now some botanists question that identification.

Finally, we visited another outcrop adorned with red tubular flowers of *Lonicera sempervirens* and where we observed shoestring ferns (*Vittaria lineata*) clinging to a rock shelter.

It was a wonderful day with pleasant weather and all the while we were serenaded by a plethora of birds such as Louisiana Waterthrushes, White Eyed Vireos, Yellow-throated Vireos, Common Yellowthroat, Parula Warblers, Indigo Buntings, Blue Grossbeaks, Bachman Sparrows, Oven Bird, Acadian Flycatchers and Pine Warblers. At the end of the day some of us visited the impressive National Champion Eastern Red Cedar at nearby Lone Hill Methodist Church.



Rebecca Byrd and Max Medley spent some time looking for little people.

Stroud Creek - Field Trip Report

Text and Photos by Clayton Webster

Seven hikers from the Georgia Botanical Society enjoyed a beautiful spring hike in the Swallow Creek Wildlife Management Area of the Chattahoochee National Forest on April 25, 2015. We were led by Ben Cash who knows this wild and rugged area like the back of his hand. We began the hike with a wet crossing of Dismal Creek and then followed Stroud Creek high up on an old abandoned logging road to about 3,400 feet in elevation in the north-facing cove.

Spring wildflowers were abundant on the lush slopes. We saw things that had finished blooming at lower elevations several weeks before. As we worked our way up the steep mountainside, we realized we were walking back into early spring. We looked out onto the surrounding mountain peaks and ridges and noticed that the leaves were not yet out on the trees near the top.

This area, with the rich Porters loam soil and near rainforest precipitation, has some former state record and near record trees. We saw massive yellow buckeyes, American beeches, Northern red oaks, tuliptrees, and the biggest black walnut I've ever seen. One cove over from where we were has a former state record cucumber tree. There are also some trees near their southern limit such as sugar maples and black birches.



This was our last sign of civilization for the day as we started where the Forest Service road dead ended in a patch of Southern adder's tongue. L-R are: Brian Basden, Matt Dimassi, Ben Cash, Kathy Overstreet, Bobbi Carter, and Clayton Webster. Vicki Miller took the picture.



On a perfectly beautiful day Ben is checking his list of plants for the area to help identify one of our finds along the old logging road. Kathy is checking her birding app to see what we are hearing. She identified many birds we heard calling in the trees.

On our drive to our meeting place in Hiawassee we ran into heavy, heavy rains. In fact the forecast was for pretty much rain all day. But from the time we met it began to clear almost immediately. The sun came out on the trail. Everything was so fresh and sparkling in the woods.

With the just finished rain, as well as all the previous rains in recent weeks, Stroud Creek and all the merging tributaries were really roaring. Ben pointed out that no matter how heavy the rain is that Stroud Creek always runs clear.



Continued on next page

Stroud Creek (cont'd)



The whole area was ideal habitat for foamflower (*Tiarella*) as well as for the many other kinds of wildflowers we saw.

While many areas of the Chattahoochee National Forest in North Georgia are being proposed for heavy logging operations, this area is actually being considered for designation as a Wilderness Area. We certainly hope this will happen. It is in the Kelly Ridge Inventoried Roadless Area. There are no maintained trails, only paths that follow the old logging roads. We gained approximately 1,000 feet in elevation. But with our frequent stops to admire the many wildflowers, trees, vines, and shrubs, the hike was relatively easy. We had a few places to walk around or crawl over fallen trees.

Getting back to the trail after our lunch on the other side of Stroud Creek was a pretty tough challenge. Vicki leads Bobbi up the steep terrain.

In addition to foamflower, we saw golden Alexander, pipsissewa, rattlesnake orchid, toadshade trillium, vasey's trillium, wake robin trillium, *Trillium grandiflorum*, and Catesby's trillium, plus bloodroot, toothwort, rue anemone, meadow rue, spiderwort, lots of violets, squirrel corn, Turk's cap lilies (not in bloom), Solomon seal, bellwort, mandarin, blue cohosh, showy orchis, trout lilies, false hellebores, Dutchman's pipe, and many varieties of ferns. Ben said that it was one of the few times in Georgia that he had seen branch lettuce (*Saxifraga micranthidifolia*). It was in bloom and in the middle of the creek that we crossed after lunch. We also saw yellowwood, leatherwood, and buffalo nut.

After climbing high up the ridge, Ben saw a perfect place for our lunch. The only problem was that it was on the other side of Stroud Creek. After fording the churning waters, we found ourselves in a paw paw patch. There were several downed trees that made a great place to sit, watch the crashing waters of the stream, and enjoy our lunch.



Continued on next page

Stroud Creek (cont'd)



L-R by one of the biggest grapevines we'd ever seen are: Matt, Brian, Kathy, Ben, Bobbi, and Vicki. Clayton took the picture.

Thanks to Ben for guiding us and telling us about all the wonderful plants we saw along the way. We felt very fortunate to have great weather despite the dismal forecast. We had the trail to ourselves as we usually do when we come to this very special place.

A final crossing of Dismal Creek brought us almost back to our vehicles after a fine outing in a beautiful area. We have crossed here before when you could rock hop, but not today.



During the day Ben and I had been talking about some of the other great destinations in this amazing rain forest-like wilderness. So after lunch Brian and Matt decided to keep going when we turned back to retrace our route back to the trailhead.

They were excited to find a promised list of new things: a beautiful cascading waterfall with a giant boulder at the base, yellow lady-slippers, ginseng, Ramp Cove, and, of course, the ex-record cucumber tree (*Magnolia acuminata*).

Join Us for Our Annual Meeting at Lake Winfield Scott July 25th

Plan to join us at 10:00 AM at Lake Winfield Scott for our annual meeting followed by a field trip led by Linda Chafin on the Lakeside Trail. See page 10 for a description of the walk.

We only have one annual meeting a year, so come learn more about us as well as give us input. We'll also have a silent auction of donated biology and botany books to raise money for the Marie Mellinger Field Botany Grant Program.

Donations and Memorials

By Anita Reaves, Membership Chair

In the last year, the Georgia Botanical Society received the following memorial or honorary gifts:

- ◆ Maureen Donohue "In memory of James H. Green."
- ◆ Mary B. Iazard "In honor of (Joselyn) Lyn Hill formerly of Atlanta, now Asheville. Longtime friend, one of the founders of Georgia Conservancy."
- ◆ Karan Rawlins in honor of "Freda W. Massey."
- ◆ Sharon Worsham and David Dusenbery "In loving honor of Harris Dusenbery's 101 year birthday, February 26, 2015."



- ◆ We would also like to thank the 58 members who contributed in support of the Marie Mellinger fund, to support *Tipularia*, and/or to defray newsletter costs.
- ◆ Thanks to Jim and Candee Drake for donating proceeds from their book sales to the Marie Mellinger fund.

We would like to recognize and thank Virgil Kennedy, husband of the late Dr. Frances G. Kennedy (former BotSoc Secretary, board member, and professor at The University of North Georgia), who donated Fran's collection of biology and botany books to the BotSoc. We plan to have a silent auction of these books during the Annual Meeting in July. The money raised from the auction will go to the Marie Mellinger Field Botany Grant Program.

Our Donor members for this year are: Bonnie Arbuckle, Nancy L. Barber, Sam and Laura Breyfogle, Frank Bridges, John and Tee Brower, Debbie and Bill Cosgrove, Susan and Ron Determann, Joel Hitt, Shepherd and Sarah Howell, Mary B. Iazard, Mitchell and Nancy Kent, Eleanor Lehner, Patricia Lowe, Ms. Ward T. Milner, Hugh and Carol Nourse, John and JoAnne Romfh, Sharon Worsham and David Dusenbery.

BotSoc also welcomes new Life Members: Guy Anglin and Jan Blue, Jo Ann Buchanan, Richard Carter, Joyce and Gene Hall, and Russell Hattaway.

Plant Genetics Class and Workshop - August 1 at 9:30 AM

This class provides an overview of plant genetics including evolutionary biology, classic genetics and other topics in the field. Dr. James Hamrick, UGA Plant Biology, will teach the morning class.

Note: **Pre-registration is required** and class size will be limited. Please register with Maureen as soon as possible. This is a charge of \$10 for the class; entrance to the garden is free. To register, send a check made out to "Georgia Botanical Society" to Maureen Donohue 136 Courtyard Circle Apt C-2 Clarkesville, GA 30523 (For info: marinadono67@gmail.com or 770-990-7756)

Bring: notebook or paper, pen, lunch to have in the Visitor's Center or on the grounds. After class you may wish to visit the grounds (such as the Elaine Nash Prairie); the garden is open until 8:00 PM on Saturdays.

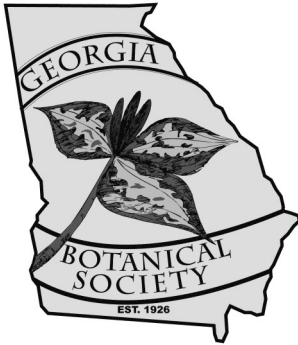
Upcoming Field Trips

<p>Jul 11-12 10:00 AM (Sat) and 7:00 AM (Sun)</p>	<p>Roadside Botanizing-Waycross/Okefenokee Area</p> <p>We will travel along Hwy 82 take 301 S to Folkston, then take GA 23 S past the entrance to the Okefenokee toward the St. Marys River (the southernmost point in GA). We will investigate interesting stuff along the roads such as few-flowered milkweed (<i>Asclepias lanceolata</i>), short-stemmed meadow beauty (<i>Rhexia petiolata</i>), Pickering's daffodil (<i>Stylisma pickeringi</i>), snowy orchid (<i>Platanthera nivea</i>), yellow meadow beauty (<i>Rhexia lutea</i>), and Bartram's rose gentian (<i>Sabatia bartramii</i>). We may re-encounter large-flowered rose gentian (<i>Sabatia grandiflora</i>). We will be a little flexible. as the flowers will dictate where we ultimately go.</p> <p>Morning on Sunday: We go in search of night-flowering wild petunia in the early morning before the flowers drop prior to heading off into the swamp.</p>	<p>Directions: Meet at the Hampton Inn in Waycross both days. Take I-75 south to US 82. Take US 82 east to Waycross. Hampton Inn is on US 82 just past intersection with US 1.</p> <p>Facilities: Possible at stores/stops along route, but unlikely after leaving hotel.</p> <p>Difficulty: Short excursions along the roadside, never out of sight of the vehicles – can be muddy or wet.</p> <p>Bring: Lunch to eat on the road (both days), water, bug spray.</p> <p>Carpooling is encouraged to make pulling off easier for our roadside botanizing.</p>	<p>Rich Reaves rich.reaves@att.net 770-827-5186</p>
<p>Jul 25 10:00 AM</p>	<p>Annual Meeting and Lake Winfield Scott Walk</p> <p>We will follow the Lakeside trail around Lake Winfield Scott and, if time permits, through the campground. We will likely see orange-fringed orchid, rattlesnake orchid, starry campion, featherbells, yellow false foxglove (<i>Aureolaria</i>), Joe-Pye weed, and many other species of composites in flower.</p> <p>The walk follows the meeting and is 1 - 2 miles with the option to return to your own car at any point. The lakeside trail is flat but has lots of exposed roots that make a walking stick useful, and the campground roads are paved.</p> <p>Bring: Five dollars (per vehicle) for entrance fee to Lake Winfield Scott, sturdy shoes for hiking, trekking poles, rain gear (you never know!), lunch, extra water.</p>	<p>Directions: Take GA 400 N until it ends just south of Dahlonega. Turn left there onto GA Hwy 60 and take GA Hwy 60 toward and around Dahlonega. Continue for about 15 miles on Hwy 60, heading toward Suches through the National Forest. You will drive through Stone Pile Gap, bearing to the left at the pile of rocks to stay on GA 60. Continue uphill, crossing Woody Gap, then going downhill, passing Woody Lake on the right. Shortly after the lake, watch for Ga Hwy 180 on the right (there is a service station/convenience store at that corner). Turn right on Hwy 180 and go for about 4.5 miles. Turn right into Lake Winfield Scott Recreation Area, stop to pay the fee, then continue to the parking area above the lake.</p> <p>Facilities: Yes.</p> <p>Difficulty: Easy 1-2 miles.</p>	<p>Linda Chafin (walk portion) lchafin@uga.edu 706-548-1697</p>
<p>Aug 1 10:00 AM</p>	<p>Hard Labor Creek State Park</p> <p>The new bike trail at Hard Labor Creek State Park goes along a lovely creek with rock outcroppings. Park historians say the riparian area has been logged, though not extensively, and was never farmed. There's a delightful shady forest trail with the most Carolina spiderlily (<i>Hymenocallis caroliniana</i>) the three leaders have ever seen in the wild; last year there were about 30 clumps of 10-40 lilies each. We hope to catch them in full glory again this year. There's additional fall forest growth to explore.</p>	<p>Directions: Meet at Hard Labor Creek State Park, Rutledge, GA, at the visitor's center. Park is \$5 if you don't have a pass.</p> <p>Facilities: Yes</p> <p>Difficulty: This hike is moderate, including a stream crossing and ~2 miles walk. We'll picnic by the stream, and cool our feet in it. Be aware: this time of year, the yellow jackets are angry. Kathy plans to hike further after botanizing, so feel free to come along for a vigorous 1 hour hike at the end. Or you can simply wander back to the cars.</p> <p>Bring: Lunch & water. You may wish to bring binoculars, hand lens, notebook, and camera.</p>	<p>Kathy Stege & Hugh and Carol Nourse kath22steg@gmail.com 478-955-3422</p>
<p>Aug 1 9:30 AM Note: early start time</p>	<p>Plant Genetics Class and Workshop</p> <p>This class provides an overview of plant genetics including evolutionary biology, classic genetics and other topics in the field. Dr. James Hamrick, UGA plant Biology, will teach the class.</p> <p>Registration is required.</p>	<p>Directions: State Botanical Garden, Athens, GA. Class will be held in the Education department located in the Visitor's Center building whose doors open at 9:00 am. www.botgarden.uga.edu</p> <p>See page 9 for more details!</p>	<p>Maureen Donohue marinadono67@gmail.com 770-990-7756</p>

Upcoming Field Trips

<p>Aug 15 10:00 AM</p>	<p>Pickett's Mill State Historic Site</p> <p>The ultimate goal will be to see three bird's orchid (<i>Triphora trianthophora</i>) in bloom, although the plant and the weather may not cooperate. There is a nice population of this species in the park and it has graced us with blooms at this time in the past. We also will enjoy the other plants we find along our path.</p>	<p>Directions: Pickett's Mill Battlefield Historic Site, 4432 Mt. Tabor Church Rd, Dallas, GA 30157 From I-75, take exit 277 (Acworth/Hwy 92), and proceed south on GA 92. Be careful: GA 92 makes several turns, including an unexpected right turn just off the freeway. Proceed for 12 miles heading south on GA 92 and turn right at the small, brown, state park sign onto Due West Road (NOT Due West Street!). In 1.8 miles, turn right onto Mt Tabor Church Road. The park entrance will be just a short distance on your right.</p> <p>Facilities: At visitor's center.</p> <p>Difficulty: Easy to moderate, about 2 miles, with one fairly long climb on the way back.</p> <p>Bring: water, snacks, bug spray. This walk likely will not be of as long a duration as most BotSoc walks. If you are so inclined, you may bring a lunch to eat at the picnic tables.</p>	<p>Rich Reaves rich.reaves@att.net 770-827-5186</p>
<p>Aug 22 10:00 AM</p>	<p>Freeman Trail and Blood Mountain</p> <p>We will meet at the Byron Herbert Reese (BHR) Parking Area and hike the first 0.7 miles on the BHR Trail, which switchbacks through rhododendron and mountain laurel up stone staircases to Flatrock Gap, where the Freeman Trail begins. The Freeman Trail winds around the south side of Blood Mountain, over a rugged and rocky terrain, crossing several small rocky streams and rock outcrops. Outcrops should be ablaze with late summer wildflowers, such as sunflowers, tickseeds, goldenrods, and lobelias. We should see two rare species, ovate catchfly (<i>Silene ovata</i>) and eastern figwort (<i>Scrophularia marilandica</i>), in flower. After 1.8 miles, we will reach Bird Gap and the Appalachian Trail (AT). At this point, some of us will return to the parking lot on the Freeman Trail (for a moderate, round-trip hike of 5 miles) and others may want to continue on the AT to the summit of Blood Mountain and then return to the parking lot on the AT (a strenuous hike of 6.8 miles).</p>	<p>Directions: Meet at the Byron Herbert Reese parking area on the west side of U.S. Hwy 129 North, about 0.5 mile north of the Mountain Crossing Appalachian Trail Store at Neel's Gap. Neel's Gap is 18 (slow and curvy) miles north of Cleveland. There is a \$5.00 parking fee to park at the BHR lot; parking is not allowed at the Trail Store.</p> <p>Facilities: Only at meeting place.</p> <p>Difficulty: The BHR trail is moderately steep. The Freeman Trail is relatively flat but there are some very large, tricky boulders to scramble over and several rocky streams to cross. Hiking pole and ankle-protecting boots strongly advised.</p> <p>Bring: Parking fee, lunch, snacks, and water. Dress for hot weather and possible afternoon thunderstorms.</p>	<p>Linda Chafin lchafin@uga.edu 706-548-1697</p>
<p>Sep 12 10:00 AM</p>	<p>Hinds Road Outcrop / Little River Canyon NP, AL</p> <p>This trip will feature visits to several sandstone rock outcrops in northeast Alabama to see a variety of wildflowers (and tree) that are rare or not even found in Georgia. We will explore Hinds Road Outcrop near Gadsden, then travel to Little River Canyon to Lynn Overlook and possibly other sites for Nuttall's rayless-goldenrod (<i>Bigelowia nuttallii</i>), Sandstone Tickseed (<i>Coreopsis pulchra</i>), Longleaf Sunflower (<i>Helianthus longifolius</i>), Small-head Blazing Star (<i>Liatris microcephala</i>), Menges' Fameflower (<i>Talinum mengesii</i>), Boynton Oak (<i>Quercus boyntonii</i>) and other goodies.</p> <p>Meet at Jack's Restaurant, 1502 Nocalula Road, Gadsden, AL 35901</p>	<p>Directions: From I-75, exit 290 and take Ga. 20 and then US 411 to Rome. At first traffic signal turn right onto Ga. Loop 1. Follow Loop 1 around Rome, making 1 left turn at intersection of Garden Lakes Blvd. and Mathis Dr. Go past Walmart and Sam's Club, turn right onto Ga. 20. Go 14.2 mi., enter AL (Hwy. becomes AL-9). Go 14.7 mi. turn right on AL-68. Go 2.2 mi. turn right on US 411. Stay on US 411 to Gadsden, AL (21.4 mi.). At Gadsden turn right on US 431, continue on US 431 for 1.5 mi. turn right on AL 211 (Nocalula Road). Go approx. 1.5 mi. look for Jack's Restaurant on left.</p> <p>Facilities: At meeting and lunch place.</p> <p>Difficulty: Mostly short distances on relatively flat rock outcrops, however, very rough terrain.</p> <p>Bring: Lunch, snacks, water, camera, etc.</p>	<p>Richard Ware & Mike Christison gabotany@comcast.net 706-766-5143 mikepaddler@netscape.net 770-596-3564</p>

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