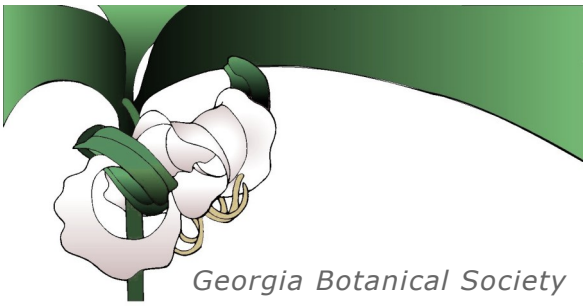
BotSoc News



Georgia Botanical Society

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The Year of the Bog

The Georgia Botanical Society has declared this the "Year of the Bog," but just what are bogs, and why are they important?

What is a bog?

As with all ecological terms, definitions can vary, but in general bogs are wetlands with organic, acidic soils. They occur on fairly flat sites, or, in the case of 'seepage bogs,' on gentle slopes where water moves slowly. Layers of clay or organic matter seal the bottom of the boggy area, so that water cannot percolate through deeper layers of soil, and instead collects at the surface, replenished by the rain. The organic soils (peat) develop in bogs because when vegetation dies, the wet conditions prevent the plants from totally decomposing, and their partially decomposed remains build up.

Sphagnum moss plays a key role in bog formation, especially in the mountains, because it can absorb 15-23 times its dry weight in water, creating soggy conditions. As the moss dies, it decomposes to create peaty soils. Sphagnum also plays a role in some coastal plain bogs, but typically other dead plants are a bigger part of the organic layer. In the Okefenokee, for example, the remains of Virginia chain fern, lily pads, and cypress needles form much of the peat.

Bogs in good condition are fairly open, sunny patches embedded within forests or woodlands. In the coastal plain, these conditions are caused by fires that kill back the woody vegetation and enable grasses, sedges and forbs to dominate. In the mountains, where fire is less common, other forces in addition to fire, such as beaver activity, are thought to have controlled the woody plants in the past.

Why are bogs important?

Bogs are very rare natural communities in Georgia. Though never widespread, they were more common prior to widespread agriculture and when fire was more frequent. They have unique plant assemblages that thrive in the unusual soggy, acidic, open conditions. Fascinating carnivorous plants, such as pitcher plants, butterworts, and sundews, trap and ingest insects to obtain nitrogen and other nutrients that are sparse in bog soils. Several beautiful orchids grow in bogs. In the coastal plain, seepage slope bogs are incredibly diverse with many species of pitcher plants. In the Blue Ridge, some mountain bogs are small gems within the forest, with purple pitcher plants and orchids scattered over carpets of red and green sphagnum moss. We will feature articles throughout the year that discuss these different types of bogs and their flora in detail.

By Leslie Edwards

IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Perspective

BotSoc News
is published seven times a year (Jan, March, May, July, September, Nov and for the Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage).

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Website:
www.gabotsoc.org

Editorial Office
Ellen Honeycutt
ehoneycutt@bellsouth.net

In spite of cold temperatures, I can feel and see the touch of Spring beginning. There are hyacinths in full bloom in my yard, and I hear that trout lilies are thriving in my old stomping grounds at the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. They are early this year, but they always come.

I have field guides near my reading chair so I can review the common and Latin names of native plants and how to spell them. I'm almost ready. I tackle *Weakley's Flora* with renewed zest; it is my ultimate go-to guide, but sometimes it stumps me. This will be the year I grasp it all, I tell myself.

The wonderfully warm sunshine that appears most every afternoon, unless it is snowing, is another reassurance that spring will arrive in my neighborhood shortly, The birds are busy at the feeders; there's not much else for them to eat now. These birds are still year round residents, but I know the migrants are close by.

The arrival of the BotSoc pilgrimage newsletter has been another part of my ritual since 1993, except for the few years we were abroad where transferring from southern to northern Europe took its place. This year we all head south to Valdosta to experience the delights of the lower Coastal Plain in south central Georgia.

We will renew friendships that were kindled on our first pilgrimage five, ten or twenty years ago. We'll make new friends this year, and together, we'll learn, wonder at, and rejoice in the natural world around us. That's what the pilgrimage is really about.

This is our 47th consecutive pilgrimage, and BotSoc celebrates its 90th birthday this year. How lucky we are to be a part of it all.

So Pilgrims, I'm looking forward to meeting you at or in the Bogs!

Maureen Donohue

More boggy details:

BotSoc members have already donated over $2300 to habitat conservation so far (2015-16). This money will support protection of the Manassas bogs. Thank you for your donations. In addition, DNR has obtained a grant in the amount of $10,000 from one of Ted Turner's companies. Per DNR, the projected total cost to protect these bogs is approximately $140,000.

Reference material to explore: The Natural Communities of Georgia by Leslie Edwards, Jonathan Ambrose and L.Katherine Kirkman. University of Georgia Press, 2013

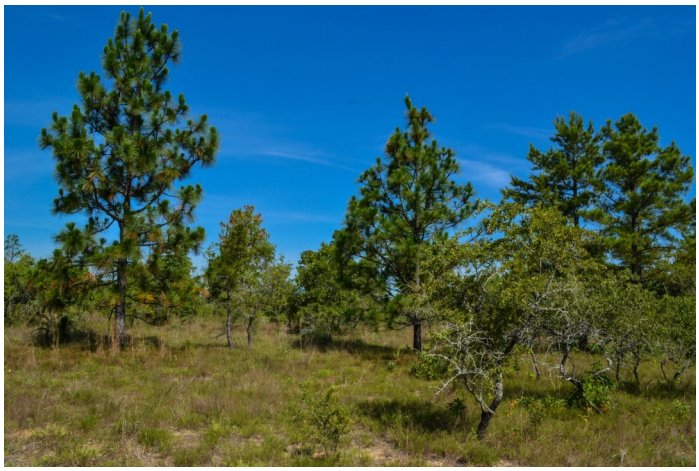
Rare Plants of the Fall Line Sandhills

Text and photos by Hal Massie

The Sands of Time

The Fall Line sandhills of Georgia extend in an erratic band more than 200 miles from Columbus to Augusta. South of Columbus, this region is nearly 60 miles wide. In some places just east of Macon, it is only a few miles wide and might not be noticed by a person driving through in a vehicle. Most major highways that cross the sandhills do so from north to south and quickly move on to the Piedmont, if heading north, or the inner Coastal Plain, if heading south. A passenger in a car speeding across the Fall Line might not notice any difference in the rolling landscape other than the fact that the color of the soil has changed from the red clay of the Piedmont to the light colored sand of the Coastal Plain.

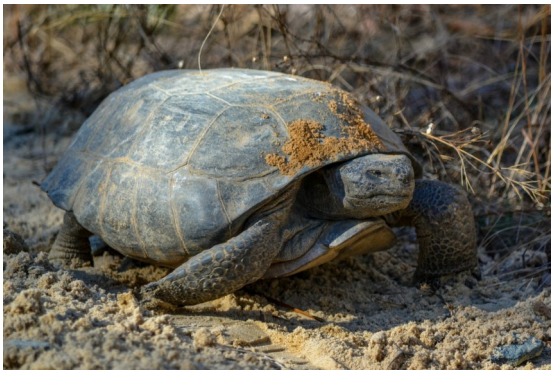
The sandhills are, as the name implies, a region of deep sand and rolling hills that reach heights up to 650 feet, rivaling the hills of the nearby Piedmont. Under the sand is a deep layer of either sand and gravel, or sand and clay. Deep beneath that layer is the same crystalline rock of the Piedmont. The sands are from the middle to late Cretaceous period, about 65 to 105 million years ago – roughly the same time that dinosaurs were heading into oblivion and flowering plants were beginning to evolve. Most of the sand originated from erosion of the Appalachians, which were once much higher than they are now, and from Piedmont rocks. I like to think of the sandhills as massive boulder fields, with very tiny boulders that were once part of high mountains.



Typical Fall Line sandhill scene. Fall Line Sandhills (West Tract) WMA, more commonly known as Black Creek.

Longleaf and Gopher Tortoises

Longleaf pine, *Pinus palustris*, is the keystone plant of the sandhills. This stately and long-lived pine dominates upland areas where fire occurs on a regular basis. Longleaf pine has deep roots that allow it to thrive in these sandy soils where water quickly disappears, and where other pines will not survive. In all stages of its life cycle, longleaf pine is highly resistant to fire; in fact, the seeds need the bare mineral soil cleared by fire to germinate. Fire also keeps woody plants from out-competing the shade intolerant seedling of longleaf.



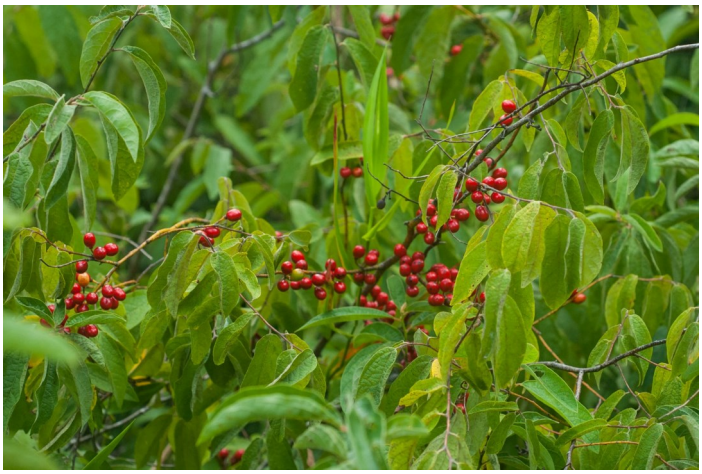
The gopher tortoise, *Gopherus polyphemus*, is the keystone animal of the sandhills. Constructing tunnels up to 30 feet long, gopher tortoises survive the intense heat of sandhill summers by going underground. These tunnels become refuges for a host of other animals – from diamondback rattlesnakes to gopher frogs. Over 350 species have been found inhabiting gopher tortoise burrows. On prescribed fires, I have seen sparrows pop up in front of a line of fire, dive to the ground and disappear in a gopher tortoise tunnel.

Continued on next page

Rare Plants of the Fall Line Sandhills

Plants with Grit

Plants (and animals) that survive in the Fall Line sandhills have to be tough and adaptable. The environment is harsh – water percolates through the sand quickly, frequent fires cross the landscape, summers are brutally hot and intense light reflects from the nearly-white sand. Oddly, despite the harshness of this region, the vast majority of wildflowers in the sandhills flower in autumn, after surviving the steamy summer.



Pond spicebush (*Lindera melissifolia*)
Photo by Ed McDowell

Dry uplands are the most significant feature of the sandhills, but wetlands also occur here. Rain percolates rapidly through the sand and often hits 'lenses' of underlying clay. The water is diverted sideways, forming seepage slopes and springheads. Many rare plants occur in these moist areas, including pitcher plants, butterworts and a number of shrubs. Water continues to flow downhill through pocosins, eventually emptying into blackwater creeks with well-developed flood plains dominated by evergreen broadleaf trees and shrubs.

Two Federally Endangered plants of the sandhills occur in these wet areas. Pond spicebush, *Lindera melissifolia*, is found around a single ephemeral depression pond at Fall Line Sandhills WMA in Taylor County. This colonial, deciduous shrub has netted veins that are reminiscent of the skin of a Carolina anole. Pond spicebush is dioecious, flowering in early spring. The female plants are easy to find in late summer by their bright red, oval fruits.

Fringed campion, *Silene catesbaei*, can be found on wet terraces and on hardwood slopes, often above creeks or rivers. It is found in a narrow band of Fall Line counties, but oddly enough, occurs on both sides of the Fall Line. The lovely, fringed pink petals are distinct and easily distinguished from other *Silene* species. Fringed campion flowers in early May.

Fringed campion (*Silene catesbaei*)

Sweet pitcherplant, *Sarracenia rubra,* is the common pitcher plant of the Fall Line sandhills. It is found in seepage bogs and streamside bogs through much of the region. This is our smallest pitcherplant, and it can be easily overlooked, except in the spring when the burgundy-red flowers dot the bogs. Sweet pitcher plant is designated as Threatened in Georgia. Far less common in the sandhills, though more common lower in the Coastal Plain, is parrot pitcherplant, *Sarracenia psittacina*.

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Rare Plants of the Fall Line Sandhills

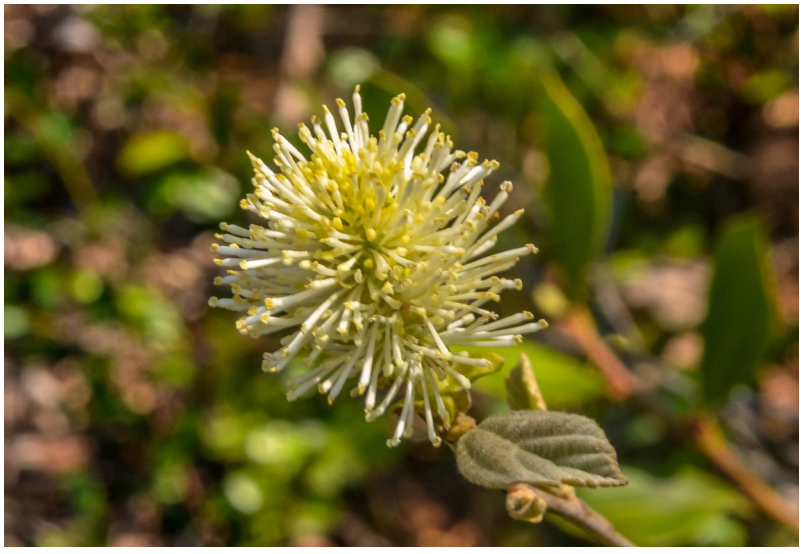
Occurring in seepage slopes and other acidic, wet, peaty soils is one of the showiest plants in the sandhills – small white fringed orchid, *Platanthera blephariglottis.* A plant of Special Concern, small white fringed orchid flowers in August and is often missed due to the misery endured by botanists visiting its steamy haunts at that time of year.

Possibly the rarest plant in the Fall Line sandhills is tawny cottongrass, *Eriophorum virginicum.* Though it holds no protected status, other than being a plant of Special Concern, it is one of the rarest plants in the state. Only one extant population, in a bog in Taylor County, is still known to exist in Georgia. Not a grass at all, but a sedge, tawny cottongrass is rather non-descript until it fruits and the tawny mop heads appear. This is a plant that is common farther north, extending well into northeastern Canada. It was once more common in Georgia, with populations in mountain bogs and in the Okefenokee.

Tawny cottongrass (*Eriophorum virginicum*)(at left) and small white fringed orchid (*Platanthera blephariglottis)*

Dwarf witch-alder, *Fothergilla gardenii,* is an ecotone plant, usually found on the shrubby margins of bogs, pocosins, and creeks. This shrub has showy flowers that stand out in early spring, and then the entire plant fades into the background as the season progresses.

Dwarf witch-alder is protected as a Threatened plant in Georgia. It is available in the nursery trade and makes an excellent native shrub for the early spring landscape.



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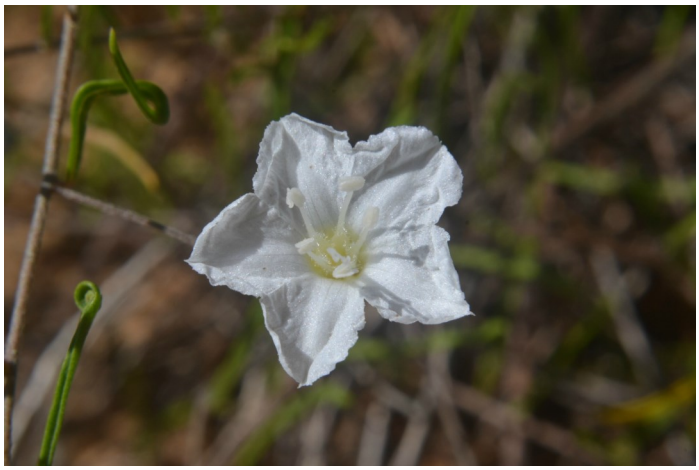
Rare Plants of the Fall Line Sandhills (cont'd)

Not all rare plants of the sandhills occur in wet areas. Sandhills goldenaster, *Pityopsis pinifolia*, is generally found in deep sand on the slopes and tops of sandhills. Like so many plants of the sandhills, this goldenaster has narrow leaves that help to reduce the impact of reflected light. 'Pinifolia' means that it has leaves like a pine. I have often heard that the leaves smell like pine, but it seems to take a little bit of imagination. Sandhills goldenaster is a true endemic of the Fall Line sandhills region. In many publications it is listed as 'Taylor County goldenaster,' a nod to the Georgia county where it seems to be most numerous.



Sandhills goldenaster (*Pityopsis pinifolia*) on left, and Pickering's dawnflower (*Stylisma pickeringii)*

Another rare plant that prefers the drier portions of the sandhills is Pickering's dawnflower, *Stylisma pickeringii*. This sprawling plant prefers disturbed areas and thrives on the banks of sandy roads where graders regularly replenish the steep banks. It is also a colonizer of fire breaks and berms. Pickering's dawnflower is related to morning glories and is easiest to find early on summer mornings. The individual stems trail across the sand, radiating from the center like spokes on a wheel.

About 80 rare plants occur in the sandhills. Not all are protected by law, or are even officially recognized as rare. Some are rare because their habitats occur in what amounts to a very narrow piece of the state. Several have very odd distributions – longleaf sunflower, *Helianthus longifolius*, is the common sunflower for much of the Fall Line sandhills in west central Georgia, but it also occurs around sandstone glades in northwest Georgia and northeastern Alabama. Carolina wicky, *Kalmia carolina,* grows along the edges of bogs and in pocosins of the Fall Line sandhills, but it also occurs high in Rabun County in the northeastern mountains of Georgia.

Big Pigs and Solar Rigs

Rare plants in the Fall Line sandhills region face many threats. Most of the problems they face are manmade: conversion of sandhills habitat to agriculture (mostly cattle), plantation-style tree farming, manipulation of natural waterways (both damming and draining), and suppression of fire. Two new threats are now playing havoc with sandhills habitats – solar farms and feral pigs.

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Rare Plants of the Fall Line Sandhills

While solar energy has many benefits, including easing our country's dependence on foreign oil, it does have an environmental downside. The fastest growing area of the state for solar farms is in the Fall Line sandhills, particularly in Taylor County. The farms often cover thousands of acres at a time and nearly always destroy gopher tortoise habitat, as well as the preferred habitat of rare upland plants like sandhills goldenaster and Pickering's dawnflower.

Fall Line Sandhills Wildlife Management Area (East Tract) in Taylor County is bordered on two sides by huge solar farms. The solar farms are fenced for security reasons and completely devoid of vegetation. Once the solar panels are up, the land isn't just degraded; it is a dead zone in the landscape.

Feral hogs are another emerging problem in the sandhills. While they aren't as common in the uplands, where vegetation tends to be sparse, they do serious damage in wetlands, particularly bogs. DNR employees recently carried fencing into the bog that contains the tawny cotton grass population and constructed an exclosure to keep out feral pigs. Such a small population could easily be wiped out in an afternoon by foraging pigs.

Sandhills for the People

The best public access to the Fall Line sandhills is in west central Georgia between Ft. Benning and Butler. The largest public land in the area is the new Chattahoochee Fall Line Wildlife Management Area which encompasses 10,800 acres. This WMA is divided into three tracts – Almo Tract, Ft. Perry Tract, and Blackjack Crossing Tract. The Chattahoochee Fall Line WMA was made possible by a special partnership between the US Army (Ft. Benning), The Nature Conservancy, and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The land was originally acquired by The Nature Conservancy through the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program, then purchased by the Georgia DNR.

The Georgia DNR also manages Fall Line Sandhills WMA, which is divided into two tracts – the East Tract near Butler (876 acres), and the West Tract (735 acres), more commonly known in the local area as 'Black Creek,' near Howard. Both properties are easily accessible and represent high-quality Fall Line sandhill habitats.

References

Chafin, L. G. 2007. Field Guide to the Rare Plants of Georgia, State Botanical Garden of Georgia and University of Georgia Press, Athens.
Patrick, T.S., J.R. Allison, G.A. Krakow. 1995. Protected Plants of Georgia, Georgia DNR, Natural Heritage Program
Sorrie, Bruce A., A Field Guide to Wildflowers of the Sandhills Region, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
Weakley, Alan S., Flora of the Southern and Mid-Atlantic States, Working Draft of 21 May 2015, Unpublished

Upcoming Field Trips

Mar 5 1:00 PM Note: late start time	**Trout Lilies** Trout lilies (*Erythronium umbilicatum*) will be thriving in a riverside forest sunspot. Along Rottenwood Creek, we'll find yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*), and silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum).* We'll see bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) and toadshade trillium (*Trillium cuneatum*) at the edges of the forest as we walk. Note: this field trip follows an earlier workshop. Meet us for a picnic lunch at Paces Mill - Walk from the parking toward the river where there is a riverside picnic area. Be there at 12 noon to have lunch with us or meet us at 1 PM for the walk.	**Directions**: The Paces Mill Unit is located at 3445 Cobb Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30339. **Walking**: A 2-mile round trip walk on a paved easy trail along the river and a creek. **Facilities**: Yes. **Bring**: Comfortable walking shoes, $3.00 parking fee or annual pass, water, camera, field guide, hand lens if you have one.	Maureen Donohue marinadono67 @gmail.com 770-990-7756
Mar 12 10:00 AM	**Table Mountain Pine** This is a moderate hike through several natural communities including xeric and dry mesic forest types composed primarily of white and chestnut oaks, hickory, Virginia and table mountain pine. Although it is unlikely we will see many wildflowers or unusual plants because of the time of the year and the area's south facing slopes, we will see a stand of mature table mountain pine, which was once abundant throughout the area but is now relatively uncommon primarily due to fire suppression. In addition, the Grassy Gap road and adjacent Indian trail have an interesting history, which will be discussed along the route. Total distance about 4 to 5 miles depending on how far down we go along the road to Yahoola Valley.	**Directions**: Meet at the parking area at Gooch Gap at 10:00 AM. Take GA 400 north until it ends just south of Dahlonega. Turn left onto GA Hwy 60 and continue for about 15 miles on Hwy 60, toward Suches. Take a left on Cooper Gap road at the now closed Tritt Store. Go for about 2 miles on Cooper Gap road until the road turns into the unpaved Forest Road 42 where you will continue straight for about .7 miles to a parking area where the Appalachian Trail crosses Forest Road 42. **Facilities**: None **Difficulty**: Moderate with occasional uphill. **Bring**: Sturdy shoes for hiking, trekking poles, rain gear (you never know!), lunch, extra water.	Cliff Shaw alpheus674 @gmail.com 706-747-9934 Jess Riddle jriddle@gafw.org 706-867-0051
Mar 19 10:00 AM	**Oconee Bells at Lake Jocassee State Park** Oconee bells, *Shortia galacifolia*, in its prime is spectacular, one of our prettiest - and rarest - wildflowers. Almost eradicated in the wild, it is still found in this park. We may also spot another rare plant, sweet pinesap (a.k.a. Pygmy Pipes), *Monotropsis odorata*, along the same trail, together with trailing arbutus, *Epigaea repens*. After lunch, we will drive to nearby Oconee Station State Historic Site, where we should see an amazing profusion of other early spring wildflowers along with a lovely 60 foot cascading waterfalls, Station Cove Falls.	**Directions**: From Atlanta, I-85 north to SC state line, take 1st exit on the SC side and head north on SC Hwy 11 for about 35 miles. After crossing SC 130, proceed 2 miles and turn left on road to park for two more miles. Well marked. Follow to park office next to main boat ramp on Lake Jocassee. **Facilities**: Yes **Difficulty**: Two easy walks of one and two miles. **Bring**: Water, snacks, lunch, camera, hand lens, and appropriate clothing for weather.	Mike Christison mikepaddler @netscape.net 770-596-6564
Mar 26 10:00 AM	**The Pocket of Pigeon Mountain** Every year we look forward to spring and a trip to Georgia's premier spot for early spring wildflowers. Pigeon Mountain, part of the Cumberland Plateau, contains many species rare to our state: Virginia bluebells, celandine poppy, bent trillium, Ohio buckeye, and a huge variety of other wildflowers. **Note:** A Georgia Outdoor Recreational Pass (GORP) is required for GA WMA properties. For more info: http://www.georgiawildlife.com/Georgia-Outdoor-Recreational-Pass	**Directions**: From I-75 exit 320, go west on GA 136, crossing US 27 onto GA 193 into downtown LaFayette. From South Main Street, follow GA 193 for 8 mi. to Davis Crossroads, at intersection with GA 341. Turn left on Hog Jowl Rd (sometimes unmarked but paved), and go south 2.6 mi passing Mt Herman Baptist Church. At top of next hill, turn left on Pocket Rd and drive 1.2 mi to end. Parking is on left and handicapped parking is on the right. **Difficulty**: Easy **Facilities**: None at site. Fast food restaurants on North Main Street in LaFayette.	Mike Christison mikepaddler @netscape.net 770-596-3564

Upcoming Field Trips

Apr 2 10:00 AM	**Power's Island and Cochran Shoals** We'll walk across the bridge and use the busy riverside trail to reach the Wildlife Viewing boardwalk over the wetlands. Here we'll enter another world occupied by hundreds of southern nodding trilliums (*Trillium rugelli*) in various stages of bloom. We will continue walking in the Gunby creek area of Cochran Shoals to find other spring delights including Atamasco lilies (*Zephyranthes atamasca*), showy orchis (*Orchis spectabilis)* and foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia)* We'll lunch in the woods along the way and enjoy our time in this beautiful forest. If Spring is early, we may head over to Paces Mill to look for horsesugar trees (*Symplocos tinctoria*) in flower along the river and flames azaleas (*Rhododendron flammeum*) on top of the ridge. Both normally blooom the first week of April.	**Directions**: Meet at the Powers Island Entrance in Fulton County where parking is plentiful. We will walk over the river to the Cochran Shoals Entrance. The GPS coordinates for Powers Island are: 33° 54' 10.42" N, 84° 26' 28.3" W Contact trip leader if you need more specific directions. **Facilities:** Restrooms are available at Cochran Shoals and Paces Mill Units. **Difficulty:** Mostly flat terrain with a few short hills, ~ 3 miles at Cochran Shoals and 2 miles at Paces Mill where there is one large hill to see the azaleas, but they are worth it. **Bring:** Bring camera, hand lens, field guide, $3.00 parking fee or annual/senior pass, water and a pack lunch.	Maureen Donohue marinadono67 @gmail.com 770-990-7756 (c)
Apr 3 10:00 AM Note: This is a Sunday	**Monticello Glades, Oconee National Forest** The Monticello Glades is a fine example of a gabbro upland depression forest in Jasper County, GA. In spring, ephemeral pools dot the site, surrounded by an abundance of wildflowers such as Southern spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica* var. *acutiflora*), Atamasco lily (*Zephyranthes atamasca*), and smooth spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohiensis*). Although located in the Piedmont, the Monticello Glades also hosts some plants more typical of the coastal plain, chiefly dwarf palmetto (*Sabal minor*) and supplejack (*Berchemia scandens*). Its distinctive trees include willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), Southern shagbark hickory (*Carya carolinae-septentrionalis*), and the rare Oglethorpe oak (*Quercus oglethorpensis*). These species contribute a striking jungle-like element to the distinctive beauty of this very special place. We hope to see a peak display of spring beauties and Atamasco lilies, but their bloom progression and emergence of other forbs will be dependent upon our fickle spring!	**Directions:** From the square in Monticello, take Hillsboro Street/GA Highway 11 five miles to a right on Feldspar Road. Our parking areas and our meeting place are at Feldspar Corporation (1879 Feldspar Road, Monticello, GA 31064). This is the only building complex on Feldspar Road, so it cannot be missed. **Facilities:** None **Difficulty:** Easy but muddy. **Bring**: Lunch and water. Monitor the weather forecast and dress appropriately. Water-resistant footwear is advised. We will be traveling through areas ranging from somewhat soggy to ankle-deep water. Most of the small pools and streams can easily be avoided, but this is still the wet season for the Glades! You may wish to bring binoculars, hand lens, notebook and camera.	Sabrina Sewell SabrinaYSSewell @gmail.com 859-338-9296
Apr 9 9:30 AM Note: Early start time	**Amicalola Falls State Park** We will walk the trail to the top of the falls and then come down the steps to view the early spring wildflowers including Virginia bluebells, toothworts, bloodroot, green violet, *Trillium cuneatum*, *Trillium flexipes*, and others. This is one of the busiest State Parks relative to available parking. Carpooling is encouraged and that is the reason for the earlier than typical start time. **Bring $5.00 per vehicle parking fee or State Parks Pass.**	**Directions**: Generally easiest way from Atlanta is 400 to GA 53. West (left) on 53 through Dawsonville to GA 183 at Juno. Then, northwest (right) on GA 183 to GA 52 and east (right) on GA 52 to the park. **Facilities:** Yes. **Walking**: Generally easy with some moderately steep climbs on good trails. **Bring**: Water, snacks, camera, lunch.	Rich Reaves rich.reaves @att.net 770-827-5186 (c)

Upcoming Field Trips

Apr 10 10:00 AM Note: This is a Sunday	**Cooper's Gap** This walk follows the Appalachian Trail from Cooper Gap north to the section between Justus Creek and Blackwell Creek. The area between these creeks is botanically rich for spring ephemerals and for ferns and will be a week (or maybe two) later in the season than lower elevations. So if you missed earlier wildflowers at lower elevations, this will be a chance to catch a re-run. Cooper's Gap is about 16 miles (about 45 min) west of Dahlonega on FS road 42. The trail section of interest is north on the AT about 3 miles from where we will park.	**Directions**: From Holiday Inn Express in Dahlonega – Turn right onto S Chestatee St/US-19 N/GA-60/GA-249. Continue 0.8 mi, turn slight right onto Public Sq/US-19 Bus N/GA-60 Bus/GA-52 Bus then turn left onto Grove St N/US-19 Bus N/GA-60 Bus. Continue 2.2 mi. Turn left onto Camp Wahsega Rd. (sign to Camp Merrill) Continue 8.4 mi. At orange barricades, Mt Zion church will be on left, army post ahead and Cooper Gap Rd to the right. Turn right onto Cooper Gap Rd. Continue 2.9 mi. Park at crossing for the AT. Meet at parking area. **Facilities**: None **Walking**: Moderate hike, about 6 miles roundtrip. **Bring**: Water, lunch, comfortable clothes.	Elliott Horner polygala @encee.org 678-249-8856
Apr 14-17	**Valdosta Pilgrimage** See separate brochure mailed to members or download brochure from the website: http://www.gabotsoc.org/?page_id=23	**Headquarters**: Quality Inn 1705 Gornto Rd Valdosta, GA 31601	Heather Brasell heather.brasell @gmail.com 229-339-3966
Apr 23 10:00 AM	**Chickamauga Battlefield - Cedar Glades** Spring is a great time to visit Chickamauga National Military Park, one of the nation's largest and best preserved Civil War sites, home to Cedar Glades, one of Georgia's rarest habitats. Here the thin layer of soil covering a limestone bedrock restricts trees to red cedars growing at the edge of the glades and in cracks between the rocks. The wildflowers, while generally not numerous, include some found nowhere else in Georgia. We will explore a few of the two dozen glades in the park and look for some of the rare wildflowers found there, such as Nashville breadroot, *Pediomelum subacaule,* least glade cress, *Leavenworthia exigua var. exugua*, and heartleaf plantain, *Plantago cordata*.	**Directions**: Meet at the part office. From Interstate 75: At Exit 350, take Battlefield Parkway (Georgia Hy 2) west for 7 miles to Fort Oglethorpe. Turn left at the intersection with Lafayette Road (US Hy 27 south). Go one mile on Lafayette Road to the park entrance and visitor center on the right. Address: 3370 Lafayette Road, Fort Oglethorpe, GA 30742 **Facilities:** Yes. **Bring**: Water, lunch to eat in the park. Pick up a copy of the excellent park trail map in the office upon arriving .	Mike Christison mikepaddler @netscape.net 770-596-6564
Apr 30 10:00 AM	**Manassas Bogs** This site is a 5 mile stretch of power line ROW consisting of alternating sandhill and bog areas. Three species of pitcher plants can be seen (*Sarracenia purpurea, S. minor,* and *S. flava*) as well as several orchid species (*Cleistesiopsis divaricata, Pogonia ophiglossoides, Spiranthes* spp.). Oceola's plume (*Stenanthium densum*), four species of milkweed (*Asclepias humistrata, A. verticillata, A. cinerea, A. michauxii*), 3 species of milkwort (*Polygala nana, P. lutea, P. ramosa*), and bitterweed (*Helenium pinnafitidum*) were found last year at this time.	**Directions**: Meet in the parking lot across from Bernie's store in Bellville. From Atlanta: take I-75 south to I-16. East on I-16 to exit 98/GA 57. Right/ South on GA 57 to Cobbtown and Collins. In Collins take GA 292 left/E through Manassas to Bellville. From Savannah: Take I-16 west to exit 116/US 301. Turn left/S on US 301 to right turn onto GA 169. Continue on GA 169 to Bellville and intersection with GA 292 at Bernie's. **Facilities:** At Bernie's. **Walking**: Easy. Prepare for wet feet, full sun, and burned conditions. **Bring**: Water, insect/tick repellent, sunscreen, long pants, hat, lunch (some food at Bernie's).	Hew and Martha Joiner marthajoiner41 @gmail.com 912-481-1623

Upcoming Field Trips

Apr 30 10:00 AM	**Crested Iris Cove** Jerry Mason is hosting us at his very special moist hardwood cove property, Crested Iris Cove, rich with crested iris, flame azaleas, showy orchid, pink lady's slipper, wild comfrey, waterleaf, blue cohosh, trillium, horse-balm, celadine poppy, buffalo nut, witch hazel, Catawba rhododendron, mountain laurel, and more. We will also visit a large colony of *Trillium luteum*. This trip is limited to 16 participants; you must pre-register with the trip leader by noon on 4/28. **Carpool**: Parking at Iris Cove is limited, so do your best to carpool with as many people as possible. We have 4 spots in our van leaving from Decatur, if you are interested in riding with us.	**Directions**: The area is near Brasstown Bald. Directions will be mailed to trip participants based on pre-registration. **Facilities:** Yes. **Walking:** Easy to moderate; some 'bushwacking' and walking along rugged dirt road. Some areas may be wet, so wear appropriate footwear. Total distance is about 3 miles. Walking sticks will be good. **Bring:** Shoes for hiking (wet areas possible), trekking poles, rain gear (you never know!), lunch, extra water, camera, hand lens, etc. Cash for drivers if you are carpooling ($10/per recommended).	Sharon Worsham David Dusenbery sharonworsham @yahoo.com 404-931-9118
May 1 10:00 AM Note: This is a Sunday	**Tennessee Rock Trail at** **Black Rock Mountain State Park** This is an easy to moderate 2.2 mile loop trail in Georgia's highest elevation state park (3,640 feet). We will walk through deciduous forests to see spring ephemeral wildflowers such as yellow mandarin, bellworts, Indian cucumber-root, showy orchis, and Solomon's seal, as well as several Trillium species. There is also a small boulderfield with masses of Canada violet, may apple, umbrella-leaf, and blue cohosh. For more detail on this hike, see the Nourses' "Favorite Wildflower Walks in Georgia."	**Directions**: Drive north on U.S. Highway 441 to Mountain City. Look for the brown state park sign and turn left onto Black Rock Mountain Parkway. Drive west up the mountain to the park's Visitor Center to use the facilities. Meet at the trailhead which is about 0.5 mile before you reach the Visitor Center and has no facilities. [Black Rock Mountain State Park, 3085 Black Rock Mountain Parkway, Mountain City, GA 30562] **Walking:** Mostly moderate with some easy and some strenuous stretches. Total distance 2.2 miles. **Bring:** $5 parking fee or Georgia State Park Pass, 10x hand lens, sturdy shoes for hiking, trekking poles, cool-weather and rain gear, lunch, water.	Linda Chafin lchafin@uga.edu 706-548-1697

Introductory Plant Field ID Workshops

The Georgia Botanical Society is partnering with the Georgia Native Plant Society to offer an ongoing Introductory Plant Field ID Workshop series, beginning this year. The goal is to enable beginners and non-botanists to identify many common native plants of Georgia in the field, and to understand how the plants relate to their environment. The workshops will cover particular plant families and how to recognize common Georgia plants within the families. Field ID, rather than keys, will be the means of identification for this introductory series, and the workshops will emphasize common names in addition to teaching the scientific names. During the first year, we will start in the Georgia Piedmont and learn about the Heath family (Ericaceae) Aster family (Asteraceae), Grass family (Poaceae) and Pine family (Pinaceae).

Next year, workshops will be added for more families, as well as for particular natural communities, such as cove forests, oak-hickory forests, prairies and river bottomlands. The geographic range will also potentially expand beyond the Piedmont. If there is enough interest, we will later offer Intermediate and/or Advanced Workshops that will teach keying and advanced terminology. The ultimate goal is to offer a Plant Identification Certificate under the auspices of GNPS and GBS.

The workshops this year will follow a standard approach. We will start with a trailhead or classroom introduction to the family, including key traits that are observable in the field; ways to distinguish them from similar looking families; and a brief discussion of their ecology. On the trail we will stop at about ten plants and learn how to recognize them, some interesting facts about them, and the natural community they are in. Resources will include *Field Guide to the Wildflowers of Georgia and Surrounding States* by Linda Chafin, *The Natural Communities of Georgia*, by Leslie Edwards, Jonathan Ambrose and L. Katherine Kirkman, and*Native Trees of the Southeast* by L. Katherine *Kirkman*, Claud L. Brown, and Donald J. Leopold will also be referenced.

Each workshop will be limited to 14 participants. The first workshop will focus on the Heath family (Ericaceae), including azaleas, pipsissewa, and mountain laurel. It will be held on **May 7, 2016 at 10 am** in the Chattahoochee River National Recreational Area. Susan Caster will lead the workshop. The first seven requests to participate from each organization will be sent details on the meeting place location. The workshops are free and are open ONLY to members of GNPS or GBS. Membership will be verified prior to acceptance into the workshop. To sign up for the Heath workshop, email Susan.Caster@gmail.com.

Society Contacts

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ATHENS, GA
PERMIT NO. 1

2718 Stillwater Lake Lane
Marietta, GA 30066-7906
www.gabotsoc.org

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Ed McDowell ed.mcdowell@cox.net
Susan Caster susan.caster@gmail.com
Hal Massie massiefarm@aol.com
Debbie Cosgrove debcosgrove55@gmail.com
Ellen Corrie ellennet@aol.com
Joel Hitt joel@hitt.com

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