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UPSTATE *happenings*

SEPT 2013

Tuesday, Sept 17, 7:00 pm
**Collecting in Great Britain for the
Clemson Herbarium**
See story at right.

*Plant something
for us this year!*



NATIVE PLANT
plant sale!
Saturday, Sept 21
9:00am-1:00pm

Saturday, Sept 21, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
To create a landscape that supports native birds and butterflies, shop our Fall Native Plant Sale at University Center, on the corner of South Pleasantburg Blvd and Antrim Drive in Greenville. The sale will feature a great selection of plants that provide habitat, nectar and food for our native wildlife. This is a great way to help the wildlife that call South Carolina home and to help make our state a more beautiful place to live.

We need volunteers to put on price tags & help set up the day before the sale, and to guide buyers, remove labels, and load plants during it. Please help make the sale a success! Sign up to help at meetings, or email merck3@clemson.edu

Tuesday, Oct 15, 7:00 pm
Botanica Caroliniana

Amy Blackwell, assisted by Mark Catesby, will take us on an field trip unlike any we've been on before.

Blackwell is a doctoral candidate in Plant and Environmental Science at Clemson; Catesby visited Carolina in the 1720s, before extensive European settlement. What did our state look like before cotton fields and interstates? Catesby made a careful plant collection and arranged to have it preserved, but until now the only way to study his specimens was to travel to London.

Botanica Caroliniana, a project undertaken by a team of Clemson University and Furman University researchers, makes original plant specimens collected in the Carolinas centuries ago by seminal naturalists including Mark Catesby, John and William Bartram, John Lawson and

Adventures in the Field:

Collecting in Great Britain for the Clemson Herbarium

In a quiet, shady corner of the Clemson University campus is a time-worn, two-story brick building. Descend the creaky stairs inside that building, and tucked away in the basement you'll find a botanical treasure trove. There, more than 100,000 plant specimens are preserved -- each one meticulously dried, pressed onto acid-free paper, identified, labeled and stored in tall metal cabinets at an optimum temperature and humidity.

Also in the basement you'll find a most engaging host: Dixie Damrel, curator of the Clemson University Herbarium. A petite woman with braids that fall to her waist, Damrel bubbles over with an enthusiasm for plant collecting that is obvious and contagious. An herbarium, she says, is "a big evidence room for researching the diversity of plants." It's a place where botanists, students and plant taxonomists can use the preserved specimens to identify unknown plants, piece together a region's ecology, help protect endangered plant populations, track the spread of invasive species, study climate changes correlating with plant speciation, and voucher (or physically verify) scientific experiments.

Damrel, who earned her M.S. in Plant Biology at Arizona State University, spent the early years of her career studying succulents and other desert flora. She also did fieldwork and digital documentation of ferns in Indonesia. She came to Clemson in 2008. In addition to managing the university's herbarium, she teaches laboratory classes in plant ecology, plant taxonomy, and field botany. Off campus, she's involved in documenting vascular flora at several local sites: Clemson Experimental Forest; Mary Black Rail Trail in Spartanburg; and Paris Mountain State Park in Greenville, as well as the Silver Bluff Audubon Bird Sanctuary in Aiken County.

For the past three years, Damrel has spent summers in the United Kingdom, collecting plants and working with the Oxford University Herbaria, which boasts extensive contributions by English naturalist Mark Catesby in its collection. At our September

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Dixie Damrel

Clemson University

Tuesday, Sept 17, 7:00 pm

Founders Hall in Dining Commons, Southern Wesleyan University, Central

For a map and more information, visit <http://www.scnps.org>

South Carolina
Native Plant Society
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Upstate Chapter

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August 3rd roadside botanizing field trip.
Photo by Judy Seeley.



Roadside Botanizing trip a “great day out”

From Pursh’s Rattlebox to Big Bluestem, 10 NPS members and guests discovered a wide variety of native plants as they visited three regularly mowed or burned roadside sites in Pickens Country. Bill Stringer helped the group identify over 27 native grasses and forbs. They also stopped at the Pickens County Museum native plant garden which is maintained by members of NPS and Master Gardeners.

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Upcoming Events

others, available through an online database of high-resolution images. As Amy will share, these centuries-old plant specimens have yielded some surprising discoveries! *University Center: Greenville Tec, 225 South Pleasantburg Dr, Greenville.*

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Adventures in the Field

meeting, she will share with us some of the highlights of her fieldwork, emphasizing points of connection between the native and naturalized plants of Britain and our South Carolina native flora.

— Jeanne Melvin

3 Ways Native Plants Make Gardening So Much Better

The words below are excerpted from an online article by Benjamin Vogt, the author of Sleep, Creep, Leap: The First Three Years of a Nebraska Garden.

‘I remember the first two summers of gardening like I remember my first kiss — it was a sloppy, goopy affair that only made me more curious. ... I bought whatever the nursery had and whatever the plant tag insinuated might work. ...

‘The plants that thrived were happy accidents: coneflowers, liatris, milkweed, Joe Pye Weed. I knew nothing about them, but once I started doing online research and reading books, I found out they were native to [my area]. Is this why they seemed to do better than the eye candy I flung into my cart as if they were mint cookies in the grocery store? Once I started gardening more and more with natives, my entire life changed, and not just with issues of less work. My emotional experiences in the garden evolved; I was connected to my home ground in ways I never knew were possible. Here’s how natives can change your experience too.

‘1. Less maintenance. My mom loves roses, but when I thought of her and planted a few, they died. I wasn’t willing to baby them ... If a plant doesn’t take care of itself, I don’t have it in my garden.

‘As I researched native plants, I found out that if properly sited, they should flourish. And if I accepted that when native plants — for me prairie plants — went through drought, they might slow down, be shorter or bloom less, I could accept not having a “perfect” garden. In fact, not knowing precisely what the garden will look like from year to year makes it more exciting.

‘Liatris, coneflower, rudbeckia, sideoats grama, Indian grass, mountain mint, ironweed, prairie dropseed, aromatic and smooth asters, goldenrod, baptisia, prairie smoke, wild senna, coreopsis. These perennials are the tip of the iceberg when it comes to my rich garden palette (there are more than 7,000 native plants in North America). They’re adapted to my climate and clay soil, and properly sited, and I don’t fuss

with any of them. I water one or two times a year — usually in the fall, to help them overwinter after a dry August. I cut them down to the ground in mid-March over a long afternoon, using them as free mulch. That’s it. No fertilizing. No pruning. No spraying. I estimate I spend one-quarter of the time “working” in my garden than if I needed to mow. Few people believe me.

‘The key to low-maintenance gardening is choosing native adapted plants, planting thickly to shade out weeds and using a diversity of forms — these strategies will help create a self-maintaining ecosystem that will bring in beneficial bugs to eat the bad ones. ...

‘2. More wildlife. New plants sleep, creep, then leap. That is, the first year they seem to do nothing, the second year they do a little something and then the third year they explode. After three years my flat moonscape became my interpretation of a prairie. And you know what brought me the most joy, besides the satisfaction of thriving plants and flowers? Butterflies and bees and spiders and frogs and birds all frolicking in my backyard. ...

‘3. Healthy space for family. A native plant garden means you won’t likely have to fertilize or spray, which means a space welcoming to sensitive insects who, through pollination, are responsible for one in three bites of food we take. ... Without insects we would exist in far fewer numbers. But a chemical-free landscape is also safe for kids and pets. ...

‘Using native plants can mitigate and often negate the need for sprays in the landscape, and you’re helping create a wildlife refuge out back. Since native plants support more wildlife than nonnatives, using them creates a space of wonder and exploration for kids. Exposure to nature has been proven to increase creativity, out-of-the-box thinking and confidence, all while easing symptoms of ADHD...!’

Read the entire article at <http://www.houzz.com/ideabooks/15785134>