March 2 Potluck 6:30 p.m. Homewood Public Library

Bring your favorite finger food & appetizer for our annual potluck and get together starting at 6:30 followed by our 7:00 program. See you Monday, March 2nd!

Spring Calendar

**Feb 29** Microscope in Natural History course.

**March 29th** Visit to Manitou Cave

**March 28** Spring Wildflowers course.

**March 29** “Wildflowers on the Mountain” hike

**April 4-5** Ruffner Mtn. Plant Sale

**April 3-5** AWS State Meeting. Register by March 27.

**April 24 – 27** Take iNaturalist’s Challenge!

**April** Perry Lakes

**May** Port Epes Prairie & back road botanizing

**June** Riverside Lotuses

APCO’s Vegetation Management Policies

**Why are they cutting my trees?**

Come hear Shon Walters, Utility Arborist Supervisor for Alabama Power, tell us about Alabama Power’s sometimes controversial vegetation management program. With him will be Grant McCain, one of the power company’s many Arborist Supervisors, who actually oversees the clearing of trees on private property.

What is APCO's policy on vegetation management? What constraints are there -- both internal, such as budgeting – and external, such as legal requirements for using herbicide?

Tree Planting Guide

How does the planning process work for various situations, such as open roadside ditches, through a kudzu patch under a power line, or along a crest of a hill, such as on the PowerLine Trail @ Moss Rock? What herbicides are used, and how is each decided upon? Bring your questions for Mr. Walters and Mr. McCain, if you’ve lost trees in the past to the utility company’s power saws. Now is the time to hear answers!
Sunday, March 29 Let’s visit Manitou Cave!

**NOTE! Reservations are needed!** - As you recall, our last visit to the Cave was in September 2017. This time, we will again look for spring blooming native plants and follow a trail recently flagged by Linda Sherk and Susan Hammack. The cave is a sacred site of the Cherokee at the base of Lookout Mountain, near the town of Fort Payne. The property is situated on 10 acres with a spring fed pond, a beaver lodge & dams, and a restored historic visitor’s center. Before we enter the cave, we will look for native plants on the newly flagged trail.

While we break for lunch, Annette Reynolds will give us a brief history and overview of what we can expect to see in Manitou Cave. The cave is entered through a window-sized opening. It is dark, so bring a hand held flashlight (phones are not bright enough). The constant 56 degree temperature inside means that you might need a jacket. Walking to the “Reflection Room” takes 20-30 minutes. Annette Reynolds will point out historical point, artifacts, signatures and beautiful formations. Most of the path consists of a hard cave mud floor that is wide enough for 2 people. The path is well marked, has hundreds of concrete steps and 9 bridges with hand rails, and at times has water on the ground. The cave part of our trip will take 1 ½ hours.

Meet Linda Sherk at the Trussville Lowes at 1885 Edwards lake Rd. at 8:15AM. We will leave by 8:30 AM in order to be at Manitou Cave by 10:30AM. Directions will be provided. Dress in layers and be prepared for the weather. Wear non-slippery shoes, long pants, layered tops, jacket/windbreaker, and a small backpack to hold essentials. BRING A HAND-HELD FLASHLIGHT, WATER, LUNCH, AND SNACKS. A change of shoes for the drive home is suggested. Please consider making a donation for this field trip to since Manitou Cave of Al is a 501c3. Make your reservation with Linda Sherk at 205-415-1643 or blt111@bellsouth.net. Check out www.manitoucaveofal.org.

Sunday, March 29 “Wildflowers on the Mountain” Hike 1:00 p.m. at Ruffer Mtn.
Meet Linda Sherk and Michelle Reynolds in the parking lot at Ruffer. Enjoy the spring beauty offered by the countless wildflowers on the mountain. Michelle will guide us up and down the trails, while sharing her vast wildflower knowledge. This hike is approximately 2+ miles and consists of moderate inclines of varied terrain.

Fri – Sunday April 3-5 AWS Spring Meeting!
Our Spring meeting will take place at the Davis Arboretum at Auburn University the weekend of April 3 - 5. Patrick Thompson has consented to be our guide. Our speaker will be Dr. Brian Keener, Assist. Professor of Biology at the U. of West Alabama and Curator of the University Herbarium. Our hotel will be the Comfort Inn located at 811 Fox Run Pkwy, Opelika (334-741-9977). We have a block of rooms set aside for our group. We have three rooms with king size beds and seven rooms with two queen beds. Price is $89.99 + tax. When making reservations, please tell them you are with the Alabama Wildflower Society. Our dinner meeting will be at 6:00 p.m. at Cafe 123, 123 S 8th Street in Opelika (we will order from the menu). Cut-off date is March 27, 2020. Hope to see you there!

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<tr>
<th>UA Arboretum – Tuscaloosa</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March 6</strong> -- Gosse Nature Walk with Ala Audubon Society. Meet up in the Arboretum’s main parking lot. More info at <a href="https://alaudubon.org/event/2020-03-06-2">https://alaudubon.org/event/2020-03-06-2</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March 22</strong> - Master Gardeners Workshop: how to successfully up-pot plants</td>
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<td><strong>May 3</strong> - Arborfest, with food, local arts, music, and nature. Plants and compost for sale.</td>
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**2020 Native Plant Sale**

*Saturday, April 4-5, 2020*

Ruffner Mountain in partnership with Turkey Creek Nature Preserve, is proud to announce the 2020 Native Plant Sale at Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve:

- **Saturday, April 4th** from 9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.
- **Sunday, April 5th** from 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

The Blanche Dean Chapter of the AWS will be hosting a Thank You Party for Volunteers after the Saturday sale.

If you would like to volunteer please call or email Linda or Karen (BlancheDeanWildflowerSociety@gmail.com)

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**FREE CLASSES!**

**Natural History & Spring Wildflowers**

Both meet 9 to 1, Samford Univ. Biology Dept. Rm 238, Propst Hall. Previous participants are welcome to come again. Contact Dr. Ellen McLaughlin for more information & to register. ewmclaugh@samford.edu. 205 595-0806.

**THE MICROSCOPE IN NATURAL HISTORY**  
**Saturday, February 29.** Learn to use both the Dissecting and the Compound Microscope to reveal the tiny unseen world of nature. Indoor course with a short field trip to collect water & soil samples.

**SPRING WILDFLOWERS**  
**Saturday March 28.** We will take a field trip to the Shades Creek Greenway & the Homewood Forest and identify blooming wildflowers. The structure of some of the common flowers will be studied in the lab with a dissecting microscope. We will train you on use of the microscope.

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**Get out your smart phone, and take part in this fun 2020 City-Nature Challenge**

**Sponsored by iNaturalist  April 24 - 27**

This April, use your smart phone, and help iNaturalist show the world how biodiverse this area is, by photographing as many species as you can from April 24 - 27. This is the first year any Alabama cities have competed. Let’s get out and show the world who’s boss! (Note, you DON’T have to live in Birmingham to take part!)

Participating is easy: just open the app [https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2020-birmingham-metro-area](https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2020-birmingham-metro-area). Select “Observe,” and snap a picture (or a few pix of the same thing from different angles). Type in the name, or your best guess as to the name (and the Botanical name if you know it.) Hit “Share,” and you’re done! If the observation is made in Bibb, Blount, Calhoun, Coosa, Cullman, Etowah, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, Talladega, Tuscaloosa, and Walker Counties during the selected time, iNaturalist will automatically add it to the tally. It is a good idea to play with the app ahead of time to get the hang of it. Photo does not have to be a plant. Any living thing that isn’t a human, dog or a cat will do!

Tonight’s meeting was held at the Homewood Public Library. In the absence of President Linda Sherk, the meeting was called to order by Programs Director Marty Shulman at 7:00 p.m. Treasurer Ida Gleaton announced that we had $2352.30 in a bank of choice. There were several announcements, including:

1) A scheduled visit to the Bibb County Glades on Sunday, 10-20, &
2) The East Village Art Center will have its grand opening on Thurs., 10-24, 6:30p.m. at 1st Ave. & 77th St., No.;
   various plants will be available, &
3) There will be a public meeting and fund raiser at Turkey Creek Nature Preserve on 10-29 at 6:30p.m.

Our speaker for tonight was Mr. Charles Yeager, Resident Manager of the Turkey Creek Nature Preserve. Charles is a graduate of Birmingham Southern College with a B.A. degree in Urban Environmental Studies. He has had working assignments with the freshwater Land Trust, DeSoto State Park, and NOAA. He has managed the Preserve since 2012. His employer is Birmingham Southern College. His topic tonight was the history and functional purposes of Turkey Creek Nature Preserve.

The preserve is a 466-acre entity in Pinson, Alabama, immediately north of Birmingham. It has a colorful and interesting history. The Native Americans were of course the original human inhabitants. The area was once a major crossroads to other destinations. In about 1816, John Hamby, of Virginia, established a grist mill. Hamby was an entrepreneur of sorts and dabbled in various enterprises, also being a blacksmith. He was also a worker for the Irondale Ironworks. He was killed by U.S. Union troops in about 1865. Some of his iron output was for the material use of the Confederacy.

During the 1930’s, Dupont Thompson, an attorney, built a house and a bridge on the property at Bull Frog Bend. His daughter, Eugenia Akin, wrote about the activities there. Alcohol usage and wagering behavior was reportedly abundant.

In the late 1900’s, “rowdiness” and sleazy activity dominated the scene at the site. In 1998, Jefferson County actively courted the idea of building a prison there. The local citizens rebelled. START (Society to Advance the Resources of Turkey Creek) emerged and the Freshwater Land Trust was sought as a partner. In 2003, the Forever Wild Board purchased the tract from the Freshwater Land Trust. In 2009, Birmingham Southern College became a partner, establishing education programs.

The Preserve is at the convergence of the Cumberland Plateau and the Alabama Valley and Ridge. One of the factors influencing its biological diversity is the abundance of limestone cleaning the available water. Among the rare and endangered species are the rush and vermillion darter, both endemic, the watercress darter, the cave-dependent grey bat, the very small Flattened Musk Turtle, the northern long-eared bat, the Cahaba shiner, and, botanically, the eared coneflower. The Preserve has 6-1/2 miles of trails. There is a mountain-biking trail. Education programs are prolific. There is an annual BioBlitz. A recent endeavor is a fish passage project to assist with spawning.

Restoration efforts have become paramount, especially regarding the replacement of privet and the removal of wisteria. There is a native plant nursery, originally given impetus by Arnie Rutkis, a metal sculptor. There is now a native plant sale, in partnership with the Ruffner Mtn. Preserve, contributing to very-much-needed financial resources, building on the hope of becoming more sustainable and independent. A greenhouse and shade house now adorn the property.

The informative presentation concluded at 8:13 p.m. Plans are now to hibernate for the holidays and the winter before resuming activities in the spring. Notice of our next gathering will be forthcoming. HAPPY HOLIDAYS; LONG LIVE NATURE.

Respectfully submitted, Charles E. Gleaton, Recorder
Huntsville Native Plant Society’s Spring Calendar.
For meet-up locations, visit Huntsville Native Plant Society.org.
- MAR 29 Edible Natives Walk on Green Mtn.
- APR 4 Newsom Sinks Hike to view Trillium Fexipes
- MAY 16 Tree and Plant Identification at Graham Farm.
- JUN (TBA) Wildflower Propagation Class @ Huntsville Botanical Garden

Alabama Wildflower Society: Gardening with Native Plants
Thursday, March 26, 2020
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
Ruffner Mountain
1214 81st Street South
Birmingham, AL, 35206

From Mountain Mint to Bottlebrush Buckeye, native plants play a key role in our ecosystems. Come identify and learn about the wildflowers, trees, grasses and shrubs that have caught your eye as we explore the world of native plants with Michelle Reynolds and the Blanche Dean Chapter of the Alabama Wildflower Society. Her presentation will teach us how garden design can promote biodiversity, then we will take a stroll around the Habitat Garden, observing which native plants are suitable for specific environments.

The purpose of the Alabama Wildflower Society is to enjoy the fellowship of shared interest in native plants and to promote the knowledge, appreciation, and use of native plants. Learn more here: http://www.alwildflowers.org/

Michelle Reynolds is an artist and nature enthusiast who manages Ruffner's Habitat Garden Club - a volunteer group that tends to the landscape around the nature center. Learn more about her art here: http://textilesandtext.com/

Note: Our Blanche Dean Chapter will provide light snacks for this fun meeting.

Please register on Ruffner’s website for this event...don’t delay this free class will fill fast.
https://ruffnermountain.org/whatsgoingon/gardening-with-native-plants

Guided Hike: Wildflowers on the Mountain

- Sunday, March 29, 2020 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Enjoy the spring beauty offered by the countless wildflowers on the mountain. Michelle Reynolds will guide you up and down the trails, while sharing her vast wildflower knowledge. This hike is approximately 2+ miles and consists of moderate inclines of varied terrain.

Please register on Ruffner’s website to register for this hike.
https://ruffnermountain.org/whatsgoingon/guided-hike-wildflowers-on-the-mountain
visit us on facebook as Blanche Dean Chapter of Alabama Wildflower Society or on our website: www.alabamawildflower.org


**Membership DUES INFORMATION**

Annual dues support the cost of our frequent gatherings, the speakers at the meetings, our field trips and the newsletter. Although membership dues are accepted throughout the year monies are formally collected at the annual pot luck meeting in March.

If you would like to pay your dues, please make your check payable to

**Blanche Dean Chapter – AWS** and send it to **our treasurer:**

Ida Gleaton - 3201 Argonne Forest Lane - Duncanville AL 35456

Individual Membership is $10; Family Membership is $15.

The Blanche Dean Chapter would like to offer the opportunity to join the **Alabama Wildflower Society**, our state organization.

Individual Membership is $10; Family Membership is $15

Please make check payable to: **Margie Anderton, 271 Co. Rd 68, Killen, AL 35645**

Or include it with your Blanche Dean dues check and we will give it to the state AWS society.