

56TH ANNUAL SPRING WILDFLOWER PILGRIMAGE

APRIL 25-27, 2025

ELLIJAY & EAST ELLIJAY – GILMER COUNTY , GEORGIA

The 56th Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage of the Georgia Botanical Society April 25th – 27th, 2025 will be headquartered across Ellijay and East Ellijay, GA.

The pilgrimage will consist of a weekend full of field trips, the Friday night social with light hors d'oeuvres, and a Saturday evening program with a casual dinner followed by two speakers.

PILGRIMAGE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, APRIL 25

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| 8:00 am - 5:00 pm | Field trips will meet at various times and places; please consult the description for your particular trip. |
| 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm | Registration & T-shirt pickup at the Friday Social held at the Victory Christian Center, Ellijay GA |

SATURDAY, APRIL 26

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| 7:30 am - 8:00 am | Early registration at the hotel. |
| 8:00 am | Field trips assemble at the hotel parking area unless otherwise noted in field trip description. |
| 5:00 pm | Field trips return. |
| 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm | Pizza dinner at the Victory Christian Center, Ellijay GA |
| 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm | Evening Program |

SUNDAY, APRIL 27

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|---------|---|
| 8:00 am | Field trips will assemble at the hotel parking area unless otherwise noted in the field trip description. |
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Ellijay sits at the confluence of the Cartecay and Ellijay Rivers in North Georgia, where they form the Coosawattee River. Originally a Cherokee village called Elatseyi, Ellijay is now the county seat of Gilmer County. What most people think of as ‘Ellijay’ is actually two towns – Ellijay on the west side of the Cartecay River, and East Ellijay on the east side. Our Pilgrimage headquarters will actually be in the town of East Ellijay.

When it was first founded in 1834, Ellijay was a very remote mountain town. It stayed that way until the Marietta and North Georgia Railroad arrived in 1884 and became the catalyst for a thriving lumber industry. In 1991, the Zell Miller Mountain Parkway (GA 515) was completed and opened an easy route for mountain tourism in the region. The new highway bypassed the historic town of Ellijay, but has been a boon for the rapidly developing East Ellijay. The area is now known as the Apple Capital of Georgia, with numerous apple houses and apple-related businesses scattered near Ellijay, especially along GA 52 which is known as ‘Apple Orchard Alley’ going east from the town.

Apple production began to emerge as an economic driver for North Georgia beginning in the 1920s, slowly replacing cotton and timber. An annual Apple Festival now draws large crowds to the area over two weekends every October. The Apple Festival began in 1971 and has become a popular destination for both apple lovers and those seeking scenic fall foliage.

Ellijay is perfectly suited for our Pilgrimage, with the Cohutta Wilderness to the northwest and the Rich Mountain Wilderness to the northeast. Fort Mountain State Park is a scenic 19 miles to the west, and Amicalola Falls State Park is 22 rolling miles to the east. Portions of the vast Chattahoochee National Forest nearby surround Ellijay. 15 miles to the north is Blue Ridge, another popular mountain town.

Pilgrimage Overview

A total of 20 field trips have been organized for the 2025 Ellijay-centered event. We encourage you to review all the material in the brochure, to choose your field trips of interest, and then submit your choices [using our online form](#). Be sure to include field trip numbers for 1st and 2nd choices for the field trips, as some trips may fill up prior to receiving your registration form. (Some trips have participation limits, and you will be given your second choice if available when your first choice is full.)

Please note where to meet the trip leader; directions may be provided as back-up and should only be used if the trip leader provides that guidance as an exception.



What to Bring:

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

Questions?

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

Location:

The Comfort Inn & Suites in East Ellijay will be the pilgrimage headquarters. Very few rooms were made available at a small discount. Instructions for booking one of the discounted rooms will be sent out via email.

Comfort Inn & Suites
234 Highland Pkwy
East Ellijay, GA 30540

Friday Night Social

Please join us for the Friday Night Social on Friday, April 25th from 6 PM to 8 PM in the Community Room at the Victory Christian Center in Ellijay. The Victory Christian Center (VCC) is located at:

208 Victory Circle Ellijay, GA 30540

A registration table will be available to get your name tag, registration materials, and t-shirts that you may have ordered.

Please let us know if you are interested in seeds/plant swapping.

If you can bring light hors d'oeuvres or soft drinks for the Friday social, please contact Lisa Kruse (lisa.kruse@dnr.ga.gov, 706-318-3287) the designated social chair for this pilgrimage. Speaking of hors d'oeuvres, think LIGHT (not main courses).



Saturday Night Banquet & Program

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A casual pizza dinner party will be prepared by Ellijay Wood Fired Pizza, specializing in authentic Neapolitan Pizza from Ellijay's historic downtown business district with their wood fired oven from Naples. Pizza dinner buffet will be brought to us by food truck right outside of the VCC to ensure freshness.

The selections will include:

- Appetizers: Hummus with flat bread & fresh made potato chips
- Salad – Vegetarian smoked Caesar salad
- White Pizza (No Tomato Sauce) and Red Pizza (with Tomato Sauce) – vegetarian and non-vegetarian
- Tea/water will be served with meal
- Cookies & coffee

You are welcome to bring other non-alcoholic beverages of choice. The Victory Christian Center does not allow serving alcohol on premise.

Our evening program will include two presentations:

1. "Recent Rare, Potentially New, and Rediscovered Flora of North Georgia" by Tom Diggs
2. "Plant Conservation in the 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan" by Lisa Kruse

Recent Rare, Potentially New, and Rediscovered Flora of North Georgia. The Georgia floral biodiversity is still being uncovered in some interesting ways. Over the last several years, Tom Diggs, from the University of North Georgia, has spent enough time wandering the woods alone, with students, and with botanical partners, that he would like to report some of his findings to the Georgia Botanical Society. These findings include new locations for some Georgia tracked and watched species on the county level, as well as a state record, several state near-records, a species thought to have been extinct since 1908, and several species which he suspects are new and undescribed. Many of these species are located in the Georgia Piedmont, an ecoregion usually thought to be very well-explored.

Tom Diggs was born in Montgomery, Alabama and grew up in the woods and waters of Alabama. He earned his undergraduate degree in biology from Auburn University at Montgomery, a master's in biogeography at the University of Alabama, and a doctorate in biology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He has taught classes at UAB, Birmingham Southern, and Samford, as well as Certificate of Native Plant Studies courses for the Birmingham Botanical Garden. He currently teaches and does research at the University of North Georgia, Gainesville.

Plant Conservation in the 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan. Lisa will share how the 2025 Georgia State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) sets plant conservation priority actions for the next decade. The SWAP is compiled by GA DNR using input from conservation organizations and professionals statewide. A primary challenge for plant conservation in Georgia is the sheer number of imperiled plant species in the state. The SWAP shows that for projects small to large, people lifting together is what will protect plants for the future!

Lisa Kruse has a M.S degree in Botany from the University of Georgia in 2003. She is the lead Botanist with the Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources (GA DNR), a role she took on in 2019 after serving as a GA DNR Wildlife Biologist since 2006. Her botany team supports the GA DNR mission for conservation of Georgia's wildlife through survey and monitoring of Georgia's rare flora, habitat restoration and management, collaboration with botanical gardens and research institutions, and outreach and education. Lisa's primary experience is in rare plant restoration ecology.

Fri AM	Fri PM	Saturday AM	Saturday PM	Sun AM
1. Hidden Pond Trail	3. Amadahy Trail	7. Coosawattee Bluffs	10. Coosawattee Bluffs	15. Mulky Gap - Cooper's Creek WMA
2. Bear Creek Trail	4. Gahuti Trail, Fort Mountain SP - North Cove	8. Workshop - Botanical Terms for Tree-shrub ID		16. Coosawattee Bluffs
	5. Cartercay River Loop Trail	9. Eagle's Rest at Mount Oglethorpe	12. Benton MacKaye Trail - Weaver Creek Trailhead	17. Benton MacKaye Trail to McKenney Gap
		11. Gahuti Trail, Fort Mountain SP - North Cove (all day)		
6. Roadside Botanizing through the Cohuttas - to Three Forks then Blue Ridge (all day)		13. Cold Mountain (all day)		18. West Overlook Trail, Fort Mountain SP
		14. Roadside Botanizing through the Cohuttas - from Three Forks towards Chatsworth (all day)		19. Workshop - Botanical Terms for Tree-shrub ID
				20. Amicalola Falls State Park

Here is [a link to the 2025 Pilgrimage map](#).

BotSoc Pilgrimage T-shirts

We will have t-shirts for sale once again, with a unique design for the 2025 Pilgrimage. All profits from the sales of the t-shirts are designated for the Marie Mellinger Field Botany Research Grant Fund. This is a special “limited edition” shirt featuring Southern Crabapple (*Malus angustifolia*). **Orders are separate from pilgrimage registration and must be received via the website no later than April 1st.** Shirts and sweatshirts are produced based on the orders received only. If you will be unable to attend the Pilgrimage, there is a shipping charge. Please visit the t-shirt order page here: <https://www.gabotsoc.org/t-shirt-shop/>



Date: Friday half day, 8 am (Limit 25)
Location: Meet the trip leader at the Carters Lake parking lot (see directions below).

Directions: (30 minutes) From East Ellijay, take US-76 west 17 miles to Old Hwy 411. Turn left, then take Old Hwy 411 south five miles to Hiawasse Rd, which is on the left immediately after crossing the Coosawattee River. (Do not turn at Reservoir Rd, which would take you to the wrong parking lot.) At the end of Hiawasse Rd (0.2 miles) there is a large parking lot. We will meet by the restroom.

Description: This short, forested trail sits just west of the boundary between two geographic regions: Blue Ridge to the east, and Valley and Ridge to the west. The site includes calcareous soils that are basic to neutral, hosting certain wildflowers that aren't found farther east. Typical April wildflowers on this trail include Yellow Trillium (*Trillium luteum*), Eastern Shooting Star (*Primula meadia*), Dwarf Larkspur (*Delphinium tricorne*), Eastern Camas (*Camassia scilloides*), Eastern Red Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Crow Poison (*Nothoscordum bivalve*), Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), Bluestar (*Amsonia tabernaemontana*), and Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*).

What to bring: Camera, field guide, hand lens, perhaps binoculars for birds, water, snacks.

Conditions: Easy trail, mostly flat with a little bit of up and down; perhaps a mile total distance.

Facilities: Yes

Leader: Philip Bouchard / 678-620-4657 / rpbouchard123@gmail.com

Trip 2: Bear Creek Trail to Gennett Poplar

Date: Friday half day, 8 am (Limit 20 people and carpooling is strongly recommended)
Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking lot.

Directions: This is an approximately 30 minute drive from the hotel. From Ellijay, head northeast on N Church St toward N Main St/Old Hwy 5 (413ft), Turn right onto N Main ST/Old Hwy 5 (0.2 mi) Turn Left onto Tabor St (0.1 mi), Turn right on GA-2/GA 52 W (4.9 mi), Turn right to Gates Chapel Rd (1.6 mi) Sharp right onto Bear Creek Camp Rd. Trailhead: The trail is at the end of the 2-mile gravel Bear Creek Camp Road. The trailhead for this hike is at the very end of the road at the Pinhoti sign, not the trail with the sign for Bear Creek Loop. Google map trailhead location: <https://maps.google.com/maps/dir//34.819037,-84.564198/@34.819037,-84.564198,18z> N 34°49.14, W 84°33.85

Description: This trail follows scenic Bear Creek through Hemlock-cove hardwood forests and passes by old-growth poplar trees and wildflowers. There are a couple creek crossings. We will arrive at a railing with steps leading down to the massive Gennett Poplar, a *Liriodendron tulipifera*, the second largest tree in Georgia.

What to bring: water, sturdy footwear, hand lens, a lunch to eat on a beautiful bluff. Dress for the weather.

Leader: Brandi Griffin 912-339-2632

Liriodendron tulipifera
Manual of the Trees of North America
(Exclusive of Mexico) (Sargent, 1905)



Fig. 318

Trip 3: Amadahy Trail

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Date: Friday half day, 1 pm
Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking lot.

Description: This half (.5) mile loop will be on peaks of the valley that makes up the dammed Carter's Lake. A multi-use trail, we will make way for other hikers and bicyclists. The dirt path will have some ups and down, yet is not expected to be too steep (moderate). We hope to see a number of wildflowers that include: Fire Pink (*Silene virginica*), Dwarf crested iris (*Iris cristata*), Halberd-leaved violet (*Viola hastata*), Three-lobed violet (*Viola palmata*), Pinxter azalea (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*), Whorled loosestrife (*Lysimachia quadrifolia*), Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), Eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*), Solomon's plume (*Maianthemum racemosum*), Eastern shooting star (*Primula meadia*), Catesby's trillium (*Trillium catesbaei*), Little brown jugs (*Hexastylis arifolia*), and more! A number of ferns (*Adiantum pedatum*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*) as well as some interesting trees to see and smell can be expected (*Sassafras albidum*, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, *Betula lenta*). Forested lake views are a bonus.

Bring: Snacks & water. References to Flora of the Southeastern US (Weakley) will be referred. Shoes may get dirty. Dress in layers so that you can adjust to changes in the temperature and your activity level. Hand lens will be very helpful.

Leader: Timothy Estep, 912-424-9758

Directions if needed: Use 3633 Woodring Branch Rd, Chatsworth, GA 30705 for GPS navigation. Estimated 17.2 Miles 27 minute drive, yet may be slower on mountainous roads. From Ellijay take 76/282 West for 12.5 miles. You will pass a 'Murray County' sign. Then be on the lookout for a 'Woodring Branch Recreation Area' sign directing you to take the next left. Stay on Woodring Branch Road for 3.4 miles. Once you see an 'Emerald Cove' sign, make the next right at the fork following the directions of a sign stating 'Trail' to our destination.

Trip 4: Gahuti Trail, Fort Mountain State Park - North Cove

Date: Friday Half day, 1 pm (Limit 20)

Location: Meet the trip leader at Fort Mountain State Park parking lot as described below.

Directions: 181 Fort Mountain Park Road, Chatsworth, GA. GPS Coordinates: N 34.7613010 | W -84.702702

Pay \$5 park entrance fee (or use State Parks annual pass), then continue on Old Fort Road to Cool Springs Overlook/Gahuti Trailhead parking lot. Park in the lot, do not park along the road.

Description: This is the first section of the much longer Gahuti Trail. We will walk out for about a mile through a deciduous forest along a ridge and into a cove forest, then turn around and return the way we came. We hope to see Lily-of-the Valley (*Convallaria pseudomajalis*), Speckled Wood-lily (*Clintonia umbellulata*), Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*), two species of Mandarin (*Prosartes maculata*, *P. lanuginosa*), Pink Lady-slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*), two species of Trillium, and more.

Bring: water, snacks, sturdy footwear, hiking poles if you usually use them, clothing layers suitable for predicted weather, hand lens, binoculars. Facilities: Available at the park visitor center.

Leader: Linda Chafin 706-548-1697

Trip 5: Cartercay River Loop Trail

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Date: Friday Half day, 1 pm (Limit 20)

Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking lot. Carpooling is recommended and we will caravan from the hotel.

Description: We will walk along gentle slopes through hardwood pine forest to the Cartercay River. This is a scenic river hike with typical plants of acidic forest. Chances to see Piedmont and Flame azalea. Conditions: Moderate difficulty along a natural trail. Opportunities to wade in the river edge. Total loop is 3.4 miles. We will travel as far as the group desires depending on the plants we would like to observe. Expect to travel at least 2 miles total.

Bring: water, sturdy footwear, clothing layers suitable for predicted weather, bug repellent, hand lens, binoculars.

Facilities: None

Leader: Lisa Kruse 706-318-3287

Note: Rich Mountain Wildlife Management Area requires access permit to enter. Please make sure you have a Hunting or Fishing license or a Lands pass. [License available for purchase here](#) (senior discount is available).

Directions: This is a 10-15 minute drive from the hotel. From Ellijay, navigate to State Hwy 52 heading East. Travel about 3.5 miles. Turn right onto Mulkey Rd. Continue 0.4 miles. Turn right onto Martin Rd. Continue 0.1 miles. Take a slight right onto Holland Court and the parking lot will be at the dead end.

Trip 6: Roadside Botanizing through the Cohuttas to Three Forks then Blue Ridge

Date: Friday, all day 8:30 am (Limit 20 people and 7 cars)

Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking lot. Carpooling will be required.

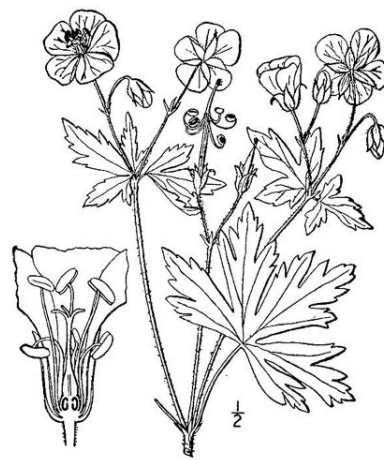
Description: We will make several stops along Forest Service Roads in the Cohutta Mountains, with walking limited to 500-1000 feet along the road at stop points. Trilliums will be the stars of this early trip – *T. grandiflorum*, *T. cuneatum*, *T. catesbaei*, and *T. luteum*, and possibly *T. vaseyi*, *T. erectum*, and *T. simile*. Other flowers that will be in fine shape include Wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*), Dolls eyes (*Actaea pachypoda*) and others.

Conditions: Easy for the most part, as we will be making short walks from cars along the roadside. There may be optional moderate short incursions into the woods depending on what we see. No facilities.

Bring: Water, snacks, sturdy footwear, clothing layers suitable for predicted weather, hand lens, bug repellent.

Leader: Rich Reaves 770-827-5186

Wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) USDA-NRCS
PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913



Trip 7: Coosawattee Bluffs

9

Date: Saturday, half day, 8 am (Limit 16, carpooling strongly recommended)

Location: Meet the trip leader [at the hotel parking lot](#).

Description: We will make a short hike to a remarkably diverse assemblage of wildflowers associated with an exposure of Conasauga along the Coosawattee River. We will see four species of trillium including decumbent and southern nodding trillium. We will also see Georgia's only population of *Tradescantia ernestiana* (Ernest's spiderwort – a globally rare species), along with showy populations of Virginia bluebell, shooting star, dwarf larkspur, Jacob's ladder and dissected toothwort. Other interesting plants we should see include largeleaf waterleaf (very rare in GA), goldenseal (also rare globally rare) and short-lobed wild ginger (*Asarum reflexum*).
Conditions: This is a very easy, flat walk of about ¼ mi one way.

Facilities: Yes

Bring: Water, snacks.

Leader: Tom Govus, 706-669-1491

Directions: We will leave the motel gathering area and go south on 515 about 2 miles to the junction with GA 382. We will take 382 west about 11 mi till junction with GA 136. Take 136 west (right turn) for 5.3 mi to junction with Old Hwy 411. Go right (north) 0.9 mi to the Carters Lake Reregulation Dam picnic area where we can use bathroom facilities. We will consolidate vehicles and can leave automobiles at parking area. The bluffs are on private land about a half mile from the reregulation dam parking area. The entire trip takes about a half hour. Field trip Location: 34.601296, -84.697172

Trip 8: Workshop - Botanical Terms for Tree-shrub ID

Date: Saturday, half day, 8 am

Location: Meet the trip leader [at the hotel parking lot](#). We will caravan to the Cartecay River Loop Trail.

Description: This is a Plant Identification workshop. In the introduction, the Steps of Plant ID will be aired. A comparison of traditional plant ID techniques (e.g., use of dichotomous keys) with the use of modern smartphone apps will be emphasized with mention of pros and cons. Emphasis is on woody plants, not herbaceous ones, because there are fewer of them and ID terminology is simpler. The two focuses of the workshop will be Pre-ID steps and Post-ID steps. Pre-ID involves good Plant Analysis (AKA profiling your plant). Post ID is about deciding if you are right or not about your tentative ID when an expert is not around. Post-ID involves a tool called HIPDAD. See 2016 Tipularia article. Time left will determine if and how much actual Plant ID we do. In sum, the focus of the workshop will be Pre & Post Plant ID Techniques with some actual ID likely. If the situation permits, the Pre-ID (Plant Analysis or Plant Profiling) will be done by means of a scavenger hunt in teams of 2 or 3 people.

Facilities: none on site.

Walking: Very little should be necessary. We will likely operate around a central location.

Bring: Water, snacks. Sharp knife or pruning shears. A 10X loupe (hand lens) or magnifier. Those with a copy of Plant Identification Terminology by Harris & Harris (2001) will have an advantage especially in a scavenger hunt. There is a 1994 1st ed. that will work too. Smartphones with Plant ID apps, preferably PlantNet, are welcome.

Leader: Bobby Hattaway 912-481-3011 botanikman@g-net.net

Note: Rich Mountain Wildlife Management Area requires access permit to enter. Please make sure you have a Hunting or Fishing license or a Lands pass. [License available for purchase here](#) (senior discount is available).

Trip 9: Eagle's Rest at Mount Oglethorpe

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Date: Saturday half day, 8 am
Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking lot. Carpooling is recommended.

Description: We will walk the Grassy Knob Vista Trail, which takes us through a unique woodland habitat, likely shaped by calcium-rich substrate, fostering a variety of plant species. The canopy here is sparse and stunted, with northern red oak and northern shagbark hickory predominating. Along the way, we'll encounter a marker tree, a notable cultural feature, and the Grassy Knob Rock Garden, a fascinating geological area with striking rock formations and diverse plant life. Near the trail's summit, the overlook deck offers panoramic views of the surrounding landscape—a perfect spot to appreciate the beauty of this exceptional ecosystem.

Plants observed flowering in April: Iridaceae – Dwarf Crested Iris (*Iris cristata*), Ruscaceae – Eastern Solomon's-plume (*Maianthemum racemosum*), Trilliaceae – Catesby's Trillium (*Trillium catesbaei*), Gentianaceae – American Columbo (*Frasera caroliniensis*), Brassicaceae – Cutleaf Toothwort (*Cardamine concatenata*), Crinkleroot (*Cardamine diphylla*), Berberidaceae – May-apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*)

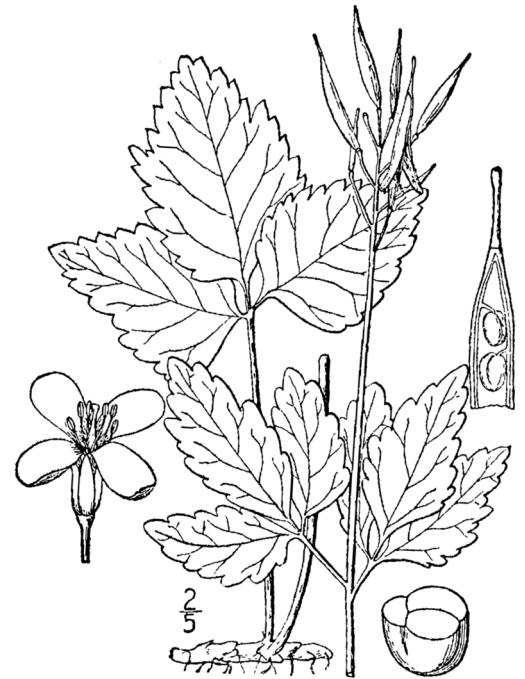
Conditions: The Grassy Knob Vista Trail is a moderate 1.3-mile loop with a 226 ft elevation gain. The walking path is well-maintained, but there are some challenges, including narrow and uneven terrain.

Bring: Water, snacks, hiking boots, clothing layers suitable for the predicted weather, hand lens, sunscreen, bug repellent.

Facilities: The "Greatest Little Privy in the North Georgia Mountains" is conveniently located near the parking area!

Leader: Hannah Umstead

Directions: From motel turn right onto Eller Rd, go 1.2 mi until junc with Yukon Rd. Go right onto Yukon Rd until it ends at Burnt Mountain Hwy (20 mi – Yukon Rd turns into Jones Mountain Rd). Go left onto Burnt Mountain Hwy (GA 136) for 7.6 mi until junction with Monument Rd. Go right onto Monument Rd and follow 4.8 mi till it ends at Eagle's Rest. Drive up the hill to the parking area with the kiosk on the left. The trails start behind the kiosk. Location: Eagle's Rest Park, 7315 Monument Road, Jasper, GA 30143



Crinkleroot (*Cardamine diphylla*) USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913

Trip 10: Coosawattee Bluffs

Date: Saturday half day, 1 pm (Limit 16, carpooling strongly recommended)
Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking lot.

See the trip description for Trip #7

Trip 11: Gahuti Trail, Fort Mountain State Park - North Cove

11

Date: Saturday full day, 8 am (Limit 15-20)
Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking lot.

Description: See trip description #4

Leader: Lee Echols 706-338-2157

Directions: 181 Fort Mountain Park Road, Chatsworth, GA. GPS Coordinates: N 34.7613010 | W -84.702702

Pay \$5 park entrance fee (or use State Parks annual pass), then continue on Old Fort Road to Cool Springs Overlook/Gahuti Trailhead parking lot. Park in the lot, do not park along the road.

Trip 12: Benton MacKaye Trail - Weaver Creek Trailhead

Date: Saturday half day, 1 pm (Limit 20)
Location: Meet the trip leader on site. Carpooling is recommended.

Description: A forested hike with exploration to find diverse plant communities. Expect to see plants associated with typical acidic hardwood-pine forest. Possibility of pink lady slippers and flame azaleas. We will cross Weaver Creek and explore gently north-facing slopes over the river terrace. Then we will follow the BMT Trail up a moderate ascent along a stream. More opportunities to explore slopes along the approach Scroggin Knob.

Conditions: The trail is moderate but gets steep/strenuous near to the knob. We'll do some off-trail exploring on the gentle slopes to follow our noses to cool plants. We will continue as far as the group would like depending on plants and terrain. Expect to travel at least 2 miles total.

Bring: water, sturdy footwear, clothing layers suitable for predicted weather, bug repellent, hand lens, binoculars.

Facilities: None available.

Leader: Brandi Griffin 912-339-2632



Flame azalea, artist unknown

Trip 13: Cold Mountain

12

Date: Saturday All day, 8:00 am (Limit 12)

Location: Meet the trip leader at the Rich Mountain WMA Check-in Station. Carpooling is required.

From the square in Ellijay, take N Main St/Old Highway 5 north 2.4 miles to GA 515N/US 76E. Turn left onto 515/76 and follow it north 5.8 miles. Turn right onto Rock Creek Connector and after 0.1 miles, right onto Rock Creek Road. Continue 4.1 miles to the Rich Mountain Game Check station and parking area on the left. We will caravan from that point. Rock Creek Road, while gravel, is fine for a sedan, but the final caravan is best with a higher-clearance vehicle.

Description: Unusually low-elevation boulderfield and extensive talus slopes cover the north side of Cold mountain and provide habitat for Georgia's largest population of yellowwood (*Cladrastis kentukea*) trees. The mountain also supports five species of Trillium, Canada violet (*Viola canadensis*), mock orange (*Philadelphus* sp.), dolls eyes (*Actaea pachypoda*), and many other spring wildflowers. We'll also look for starflower (*Lysimachia borealis*), which occurs at multiple nearby sites. We will slowly explore the steep slopes guided by our interests rather than a trail, and the talus slopes will make this hike much more challenging than a typical BotSoc outing.

Conditions: Strenuous. If you were designing a place to twist ankles, you would come up with something like Cold Mountain.

What to bring: water, sturdy footwear, clothing layers suitable for predicted weather, hand lens

Facilities: None

Leader: Jess Riddle 315-350-1179

Note: Rich Mountain Wildlife Management Area requires access permit to enter. Please make sure you have a Hunting or Fishing license or a Lands pass. [License available for purchase here](#) (senior discount is available).

Trip 14: Roadside Botanizing through the Cohuttas - Three Forks towards Chatsworth

Date: Saturday All day, 8:30 am (Limit 20 people and 7 cars)

Location: Meet the trip leader [at the hotel parking lot](#).

Description: This is an exploration trip in the opposite direction from the other Cohutta Mountains Roadside Botanizing. As in that trip, we will make several stops along Forest Service Roads in the Cohutta Mountains, with walking limited to 500-1000 feet along the road at stop points. Updates will be provided about details once the time comes for scouting the trail prior to the day of the event.

Conditions: Easy for the most part, as we will be making short walks from cars along the roadside. There may be optional moderate short incursions into the woods depending on what we see.

Bring: water, sturdy footwear, clothing layers suitable for predicted weather, hand lens, bug repellent.

Facilities: None

Leader: Rich Reaves, 770-827-5186

Trip 15: Mulky Gap - Cooper's Creek WMA

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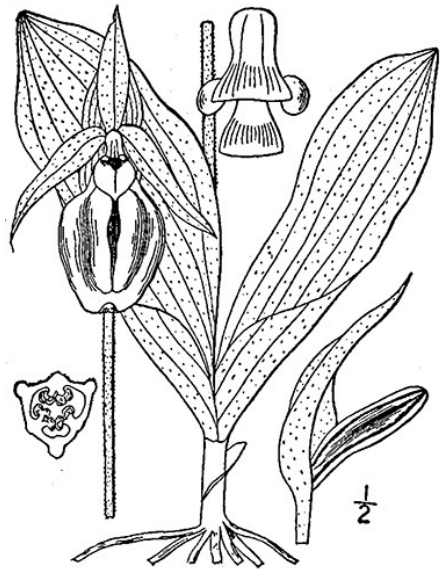
Date: Sunday, full day, 8 am
Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking lot. Carpooling will be required (see below).

Description: Our main attraction will be a population of Pink Lady's Slippers (*Cypripedium acaule*) close to our parking spot. Then we will take an old logging road 1.5 miles out and back (3 miles RT) to see great display of spring wildflowers, with some species not seldom seen. Eat lunch at turn around spot. Level walk with very little elevation change but it is an unmaintained trail.

Leader: Clayton Webster 678-925-1091

Carpooling: Required from Blairsville Park & Ride to Hike Location. Carpool groups dependent on if people are just going to see the Lady's Slippers, or if they are going to do the entire hike.

Directions: Take US 76 from hotel in Ellijay to Blairsville. Turn RT on Blue Ridge Hwy, go 430 ft., turn left, go 52 ft. to the Blairsville Park & Ride at 391 Blue Ridge Hwy, Blairsville 30512.



Pink Lady's Slippers (*Cypripedium acaule*) USDA-NRCS
PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913

Trip 16: Coosawattee Bluffs

Date: Sunday, half day, 8am (Limit 16)
Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking lot.

Description: See trip description #7

Leader: Tom Govus

Directions: We will leave the motel gathering area and go south on 515 about 2 miles to the junction with GA 382. We will take 382 west about 11 mi till junction with GA 136. Take 136 west (right turn) for 5.3 mi to junction with Old Hwy 411. Go right (north) 0.9 mi to the Carters Lake Reregulation Dam picnic area where we can use bathroom facilities. We will consolidate vehicles and can leave automobiles at parking area. The bluffs are on private land about a half mile from the reregulation dam parking area. The entire trip takes about a half hour. Field trip Location: 34.601296, -84.697172

Trip 17: Benton MacKaye Trail to McKenney Gap

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Date: Sunday, full day, 8 am (Limit 20)
Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking lot. Carpooling is recommended.

Description: We will follow the Benton MacKaye Trail along a major ridgeline for about 1.25 miles to an area of extremely rich soil around McKenney Gap. We should see foamflower (*Tiarella*), wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*), sweet white trillium (*Trillium*), and many other spring wildflowers.

Conditions: Easy to moderate. The trail ascends and descends gradually throughout its length.

Leader: Jess Riddle

Directions: From the square in Ellijay, take Dalton Street north 0.4 miles and turn right onto Broadtown Rd. Follow it 10.8 miles and turn left onto Bushyhead Rd. Follow it 1.6 or 1.7 miles (about 100 yards past Bushyhead Gap) to Forest Service Road 793 on the left. Take FSR 793 to its end, about 3 miles, and park. FSR 793 does not appear on Google maps, and while it was fine for a sedan a few years ago, it may require a high clearance vehicle now.

Field trip Location: N 34.82823 W 84.43826 (Google maps does not supply accurate directions)



Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913

Trip 18: West Overlook Trail, Fort Mountain State Park

Date: Sunday, half day, 8am (Limit 20)
Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking area (directions provided as back-up).

Directions: 181 Fort Mountain Park Road, Chatsworth, GA. GPS Coordinates: N 34.7613010 | W -84.702702

Pay \$5 park entrance fee (or use State Parks annual pass), then follow Fort Mtn Park Rd for 0.6 mi. Continue straight on Old Fort Rd for 1.7 mi. until the road ends at the parking lot for the Old Fort Picnic Area. We will gather near the restrooms.

Description: Our route will take us through a dry forest on a high ridge, making a loop around the highest point in the park (the actual Fort Mountain). We will go past boulders and other rock exposures, providing sunny openings in the forest. The outbound part of the loop has a western aspect, followed by northern and then eastern aspects, allowing us to compare the vegetation in these different zones. (There are also great views from the West Overlook.) On the return leg, we'll take a short detour to the Cool Springs Overlook, which should provide still another contrast. At the very least, we'll probably see Birdsfoot Violet, Phlox, Yellow Stargrass, and Pink Lady's Slipper – and possibly a lot more. We'll also share tips on where else to look in this park to find interesting wildflowers.

Bring: water, snacks, sturdy footwear, hiking poles if you usually use them, clothing layers suitable for predicted weather, hand lens, binoculars. Facilities: Available at the park visitor center.

Leader: Philip Bouchard / 678-620-4657 / rpbouchard123@gmail.com

Trip 19: Workshop - Botanical Terms for Tree-Shrub ID

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Date: Sunday, half day, 8 am
Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking lot. We will caravan to the Cartecay River Loop Trail.

Description: See description for #8

Leader: Bobby Hattaway 912-481-3011 botanikman@g-net.net

Note: Rich Mountain Wildlife Management Area requires access permit to enter. Please make sure you have a Hunting or Fishing license or a Lands pass. [License available for purchase here](#) (senior discount is available).

Trip 20: Amicalola Falls State Park

Date: Sunday, half day, 8am
Location: Meet the trip leader at the hotel parking lot. Park entrance fee (\$5) or State Parks annual pass will be required per car.

Description: Amicalola Falls State Park sits on the edge of the Blue Ridge Escarpment and is home to the highest waterfall in Georgia (729 feet, a cascading waterfall). From the top of the falls there are beautiful views to the south. We will spend most of our time close to Amicalola Creek and should see many spring ephemerals, including wild geranium, multiple species of violets, trailing arbutus, star chickweed, at least two species of trillium, foam flower, rue anemone, woodland phlox, dwarf crested iris, and Jack-in-the-pulpit.

Conditions: Due to the nature of this state park, some parts of this trip may be strenuous. Most of the trails go steeply up and come steeply down. I will try to find a route that minimizes steep sections and gives us maximum wildflower opportunities. Over all walking probably won't exceed 2 miles.

Bring: water, sturdy footwear, clothing layers suitable for predicted weather, hand lens, bug repellent.

Facilities: Available at the Visitor Center

Leader: Hal Massie 478-957-6095

Directions: From the hotel parking lot, go out to Highway 5/US 76 (Zell Miller Parkway) and turn right. Go about 2 miles and turn left at the light, getting in the right-hand lane. Immediately after crossing the river, turn right onto GA 52 East. Follow GA 52 for about 20 miles. The entrance to Amicalola Falls State Park will be on your left. Park near the Visitor Center, which will be on the right. Pay \$5 park entrance fee (or use State Parks annual pass).



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For all field trips, please note: Contact the trip leader if you plan to meet onsite instead of at the designated meeting place. Be sure to check times and meeting locations before you register for trips.