

CHINQUAPIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN BOTANICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 24 (3)
FALL 2016



SABS is US !!!

Announcing our new website: <http://sabs.us>

The Southern Appalachian Botanical Society has moved to a new address in cyberspace: sabs.us. Most of our members are probably more familiar with URLs that end in dot-com, dot-org, dot-net, or dot-edu (top-level domains, in net-speak). But those were all unavailable, for one reason or another.

The new web address is nice and short. You can put “www” in front if you want, but it isn’t necessary. If you have trouble remembering that unusual dot-us ending, here’s an easy mnemonic trick. Just remember that SABS is US. All of us. It’s OUR society. So the URL is also a reminder that SABS is only as great as we all make it. Can you sense the editorial pep-talk coming? Get involved! Contact a council-member (listed on the next page) and make suggestions! Volunteer for a committee or serve as an officer!! Recruit new members!!!

For many years, the SABS web-pages have been hosted at Appalachian State University, and we are very grateful for their hospitality. However, that arrangement had some limitations. Our new website will allow SABS officers to edit the pages more easily, post larger files when necessary, and offer more online registration and payment options.

As this Chinquapin goes to press, the new site is operational but parts are still under construction. For the time being, both sabs.us and sabs.appstate.edu still exist, and if you can’t find what you want on one, you might try the other. When the transfer is complete, you’ll be automatically redirected if you try to use the old address. For now, check it out! Maybe this would be a good time to pay those dues online.

Annual Meeting Alert!

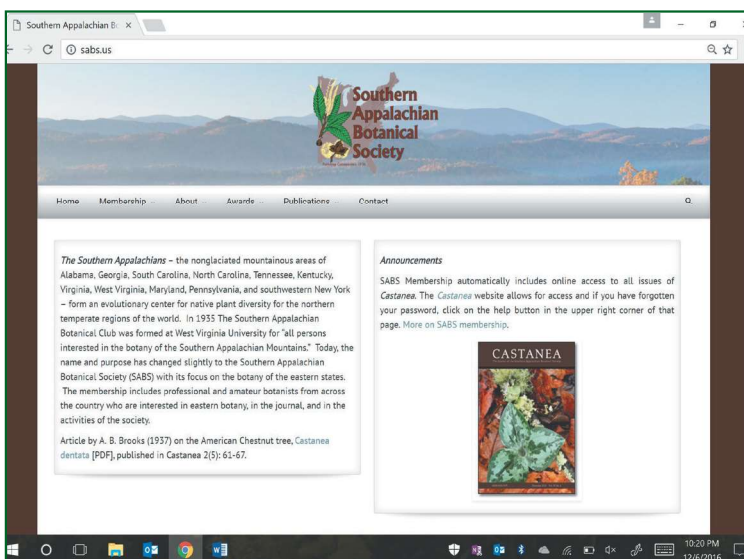
The 2017 annual meeting of the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society will be held March 29 – April 1, in Montgomery, Alabama, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Association of Southeastern Biologists. Abstract submission and registration materials will be available soon on the ASB webpage, <http://www.sebiologists.org>.

Earl Core Student Awards Increased Council approves \$750 limit for student research grants

At its fall meeting, the SABS Council voted unanimously to increase the maximum limit for student research grants from \$500 to \$750. The Earl Core Student Award honors one of the founders of SABS, and provides financial assistance in support of student research projects in plant taxonomy, systematics, and ecology. Applications are due by February 7, 2017, and must include a description of the project and an itemized budget. A justification must be provided for all funds requested, up to the maximum limit of \$750. For more information, see the article on society awards and grants elsewhere in this newsletter, or visit the new SABS website at <http://sabs.us>.

George and Elizabeth Ellison Named “Naturalists of the Year”

In November, George and Elizabeth Ellison received the Naturalist of the Year award from the Blue Ridge Naturalist Network. George’s essays on a wide range of natural history topics, and Elizabeth Ellison’s artwork, will be familiar to regular readers of *Chinquapin*, as they have been featured in almost every issue since the first one in 1993. George has just published a new book of essays on natural history, entitled *Literary Excursions in the Southern Highlands*, which is reviewed in the “Book Corner” on page 21 of this issue. The book was launched at a ceremony in the North Carolina Arboretum on November 12. At the conclusion of that ceremony, the Blue Ridge Naturalist Network presented George and Elizabeth with their Naturalist of the Year award. George has previously received the Wild South Roosevelt-Ashe Award for conservation journalism, and earlier this year he was named by the Great Smoky Mountains Association as “One of the 100 most influential figures in the history of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.”



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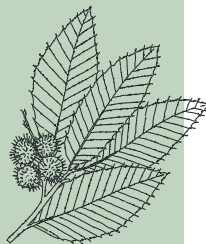
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**From The Editor's Desk:**

Joe Pollard, Newsletter Editor

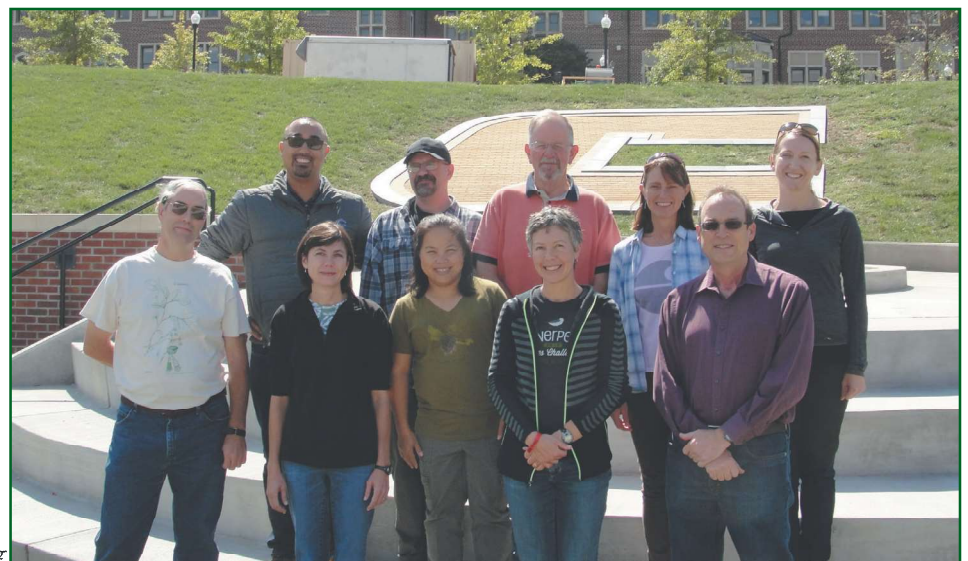
As the editor of the *Chinquapin* newsletter, I am supposed to produce four issues per year, but in 2016 I have fallen behind schedule. This is, officially, volume 24, number 3, the third issue of 2016. I considered cancelling the fourth issue, or making a combined fall-winter issue, but instead I am hoping to just follow this quickly with number 4, and then try to get back on schedule as we move through the four issues of 2017. There's no particular reason for the delays; I just got busy with my other responsibilities and procrastinated. My apologies to the readership.

At the beginning of October, the members of the SABS council got together at the University of Tennessee – Chattanooga for a full day of discussions of society business. Some important announcements from these sessions, including the new society website (sabs.us) and increases in the Core Student Research Awards, are reported on the front page of this issue. Other business from our meetings, such as updates to the constitution and bylaws, will be brought to the membership at the annual meeting next spring. There was also discussion of the SABS presence at the national Botany 2016 meeting. This year it was conveniently located in Savannah, so several of our officers were present. We sold a lot of t-shirts, which in turn helped us to recruit 20 new

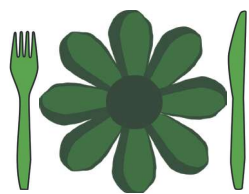
student members. That's great news! All members – old and new – should feel free to let me know how *Chinquapin* can work better for you. I welcome questions, comments, and contributions from all.

SABS Welcomes Our New Members

Jennifer Blake-Mahmud
Morgan Chase Caldwell
Brandi Cannon
Charlie DeLavoie
Nathan Hartley
Marcus Jones
Jorge LaFantasie
Matthew Lehmitz
Edward Lowry
Benjamin R. Montgomery
Mary Rath
Amanda Salvi
Cynthia Sechrest
Michelle Smith
Mackenzie Taylor
Rebecca Valls
Mitchell Vaughn
Andi Wolfe
James Wood
Samantha Worthy
Wen-Bin Yu



The SABS Council assembled for a full day business meeting on October 1 on the campus of the University of Tennessee – Chattanooga. Pictured left to right are: (front) Charlie Horn, Lisa Wallace, Pum Grubbs, Steph Jeffries, Joe Pollard, (back) Jay Bolin, Chris Randle, Mike Held, Kathy Mathews, Jennifer Boyd.



Edible Wild Plants: From Mighty Oak to Mild Mok

by Lytton John Musselman, Old Dominion University

The most abundant native nuts in Eastern North America are the least utilized. Oaks, species of the genus *Quercus*, are the best known and most diverse group of trees in our flora. Their fruits are the familiar acorns.

Oaks can be divided into two groups, the white oaks and the red oaks. White oaks have rough upper bark; in red oaks the upper bark is smooth. White oak acorns mature in one year, red oaks in two years. White oak leaves lack prominent bristles at their tips, most black oaks have bristles. Knowing the difference is important. Red oak acorns are usually extremely bitter and virtually unpalatable.

In some parts of the United States acorns were a staple food for native peoples. Acorns were also subsistence food in Europe and Western Asia although current use is very limited. I have seen acorns utilized in Kurdish communities in the Zagros Mountains, where they once were an important food source for people and animals. During Saddam Hussein's reign of terror, Kurds were forced to the mountains to harvest acorns for sustenance. Oaks retain a place in Kurdish lore. Kurds have a saying that they should not worry, because if God cares enough to provide a lowly acorn with a cap,

He certainly will care for people. The pharmacies in the labyrinth bazaar in Sulimaini sell acorn cups as a medicine for diarrhea and sometimes the nuts as food. But acorns for any human use are underappreciated in the United States.



Acorns of *Quercus aegilops* purchased in the Sulimaini bazaar, Iraq. This is one of the white oak group and the large, distinct cup scales are evident.

All acorns are edible. However, acorns from red oaks are loaded with tannins requiring leaching by boiling or soaking for palatability and edibility. Besides being unpalatable, prolonged consumption of raw acorns is reported to cause kidney damage. White oak acorns need less leaching to remove tannins and are often naturally sweet. Always bear in mind, however, that wild plants differ from cultivated plants in being variable, so some acorns may be more bitter than

others-- even from neighboring trees. My recommendation for raw acorn munching are white oak (*Quercus alba*), chestnut oak (*Q. montana*, formerly *Q. prinus*), swamp chestnut oak (*Q. michauxii*), bur oak (*Q. macrocarpa*), and post oak (*Q. stellata*). In my opinion, the haute cuisine of all is the live oak (*Q. virginiana*) with sweet, starchy nuts. All oaks have mast years meaning abundant fruits one year and intervening years with meager production.



Acorns of white oak. The large, rough cup scales are evident. Like most white oaks, acorns of this species need to be collected as soon as they are ripe before the hypocotyl emergence that can occur while the nuts are still on the tree. Pike's Peak State Park, McGregor, Iowa.



Acorns of blue jack oak, *Quercus incana*, showing the features of the red oak group with the narrow cup rim and very flat cup scales (left) and orange flesh of the seed. First Landing State Park, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Acorns can easily be processed into nutritious and almost tasty flour. Caution! Use only freshly fallen acorns or collect them from the tree to avoid aflatoxins. These serious poisons and carcinogens are often more common in the fall.

The biggest problem processing acorns is extracting the meat from the seed. The fruit

coat is tough. I use two approaches. Although time consuming, the acorns can be cut lengthwise with a sicator or fine sharp rose pruner. Or, the acorn can be cracked with a hammer. The sicator allows relatively easy removal of the nutmeat with a teasing needle or nail and avoids the fragments from hammering. Peel away as much as possible of the brown, fibrous material (the seed coat) between the shell and the acorn meat. It is bitter.

Acorns continued on Page 23

BOTANICAL EXCURSIONS

INWARD EYES

By George Ellison (www.georgeellison.com)

Artwork by Elizabeth Ellison (www.elizabethellisongallery.com)



You must have the bird in your heart before you can find it in the bush.

—John Burroughs, “Sharp Eyes” (1907)

I can remember that 1975 was a wildflower sort of year, 1980 was a tree sort of year, 1984 was a bird sort of year, 1989 was a mushroom sort of year and 1999 was a fern sort of year.

The summer of 2015 was a butterfly sort of summer. The shrubs and wildflowers in our yard and along the creek that borders the far side of the yard were alive with all the pretty butterflies throughout the long hot summer and into fall: Appalachian azure, silvery checkerspot, gray comma, pearl crescent, dreamy duskywing, frosted elfin, mourning cloak, silver-spotted skipper, tiger swallowtail, West Virginia white, hoary edge skipper and more.

Why? Well, it seemed that way because those were the years when I concentrated on learning wildflowers, birds, mushrooms, ferns and butterflies. I was on the lookout for each, and I really paid attention when I located them. It sometimes seemed as if I could will them into existence if I concentrated just right. When at my best, I maintain an uncluttered mind. If you and I were out walking tomorrow, and you said, “George, there’s a cloudless sulphur butterfly over there,” I would be all eyes. Everywhere I look these days I see butterflies because I’ve just started paying attention to them, and I’ve already (sort of like an athlete preparing for an event) visualized what they look like and where I’m likely to encounter them.

The nineteenth-century American naturalist John Burroughs (1837–1921) touched on this matter in “Sharp Eyes,” an essay published by Houghton Mifflin in 1907 as part of a collection titled *Birds and Bees: Sharp Eyes and Other Papers*:

One eye seconds and reinforces the other, I have often amused myself by wondering what the effect would be if one could go on opening eye after eye to the number, say, of a dozen or more... At any rate some persons seem to have opened more eyes than others, they see with such force and distinctness; their vision penetrates the tangle and obscurity where that of others fails like a spent or impotent bullet. How many eyes did Gilbert White open?... how many did Henry Thoreau?... how many did Audubon?... how many does the hunter, matching his sight against the keen and alert sense of a deer or a moose, or a fox or a wolf? Not outward eyes, but inward. We open another eye whenever we see beyond the first general features or outlines of things—whenever we grasp the special details and characteristic markings that this mask covers... You must have the bird in your heart before you can find it in the bush. The eye must have purpose and aim. No one ever yet found the walking fern who did not have the walking fern in his mind. A person whose eye is full of Indian relics picks them up in every field he walks through.

If you and I were out walking tomorrow, and you said, “George, there’s a female rose-breasted grosbeak or a bottle gentian or milky mushroom or rattlesnake grape fern,” I would look but I might have some difficulty seeing them the way I once did when they were new to my experience.

We are, after all, as they say, downsizing—old field guides, backcountry maps, fishing gear, running shoes, pressed plants,

Inward Eyes continued on Page 21

Inward Eyes continued from Page 20

you name it, are being pared down. We can't throw them out the window without raising a ruckus, so we haul them off to the nearest thrift shop sponsored by an animal shelter, the homeland of discarded enthusiasms.

If we're not careful, we'll downsize ourselves right out of our hardearned sense of wonder. How do we go about making sure we continue seeing the world about us with fresh eyes even though we don't care to adopt new enthusiasms? One way to do so might be to return to and reenergize the old ones. Revisit the secluded nook where you first located yellow lady's slipper or walking fern or glade spurge. Go back up into the Alarka Laurel, which you first visited forty-some years ago when the kids were still kids. See if there are red crossbills at Clingmans Dome this winter. Keep searching for the elusive black-billed cuckoos and olive-sided flycatchers. Or stop searching for them and they will be in the plum tree outside the kitchen window tomorrow morning.

Reread The Cloud of Unknowing.

Reread Bartram's Travels.

Reread White's Natural History of Selborne.

Reread everything by Hazlitt.

Reread Hudson's Far Away and Long Ago.

Reread Farrer's On the Eaves of the World.

Reread Peattie's The Road of a Naturalist.

Reread Teale's North with Spring.

Reread Gilfillan's Burnt House to Paw Paw.

I need not go on. You know what I'm talking about.

Editor's Note: -- This essay appeared in George and Elizabeth's Ellison's Literary Excursions in the Southern Highlands: Essays on Natural History, published on October 31, 2016 by The History Press in Charleston SC. For more information on this book, see the "Book Corner" feature at right.

"By far, the greatest proportion of the diversity among living organisms reflects, not their adaptation to different habitats, but different ways of becoming adapted to the same habitat. Biological communities consisting of scores or hundreds of different species of animals and plants can exist in the same habitat because each species exploits the environment in a different way than its associates."

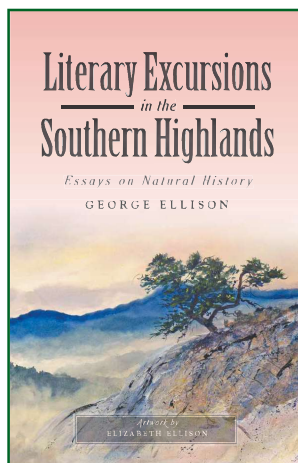
G. Ledyard Stebbins, Jr., 1950,
Variation and Evolution in Plants,
Columbia University Press, p. 195.

Book Corner

Literary Excursions in the Southern Highlands: Essays on Natural History

by George Ellison, with artwork by Elizabeth Ellison.

(©2016, The History Press, ISBN 978-1-46713-611-2)



It is remotely possible that someone, perhaps a new member of SABS, might be reading this article without ever having read an essay on natural history by George Ellison. If that applies to you, I suggest you stop reading at the end of this sentence, turn immediately to George's essay entitled "Inward Eyes" included in this issue of Chinquapin, and read it instead. The beauty of George's prose and the unique insights he provides speak for themselves far more clearly in the original than in any review I can write.

George Ellison lives in Bryson City, North Carolina, on the edge of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. For 30 years he has written a regular newspaper column called "Nature Journal" for the Asheville Citizen-Times. His "Botanical Excursions" column in Chinquapin has been a regular feature since volume 1, issue 1, in 1993. He also writes a general-interest column entitled "Back Then" for the Smoky Mountain News, a regional newsmagazine. It is not uncommon for him to use an article originally published in one of these outlets and repurpose it for another; however, he has the gift of understanding his audience and adapting the content accordingly. The same is true of his new book, Literary Excursions in the Southern Highlands. Several of the essays it contains may seem familiar to Chinquapin readers because they originated here. Others have travelled the opposite direction; the "Inward Eyes" column in this issue was adapted from Chapter 49 of Literary Excursions.

In his thoroughly enjoyable new book, George Ellison manages to speak with many voices at the same time. He is a poet, a storyteller and an essayist. He is a student of the history of these lands and their people but also a product of his personal history of living closely with the land. He tells us several times in the book that he is not a trained biologist; however, he knows experts throughout the region and channels their knowledge to the reader. Years of experience leading natural history groups have given him the voice of a teacher, one who understands the curiosities of his students and knows how to simultaneously inform and entertain them. Sometimes when many voices speak at once, the result can be chaotic, but I think one of George's great talents is his ability to bring these many perspectives into a perfect harmony, always with a dash of gentle good humor and the added dimension of Elizabeth's evocative artwork. Above all, it is clear from everything he writes that George personally loves the Southern Highlands. Read these essays and you will share in that passion.

- Joe Pollard

Botanical Brainteasers

By Joe Pollard and Janie Marlow

Our summer Brainteasers [Chinquapin 24(2)] were (1) *Eutrochium maculatum* (Spotted Joe Pye Weed), (2) *Kalmia carolina* (Southern Sheepkill), (3) *Magnolia fraseri* (Fraser Magnolia), (4) *Lysimachia quadrifolia* (Whorled Loosestrife) and (5) *Medeola virginiana* (Indian Cucumber-root). A very diverse group – what could they possibly have in common? What we had in mind was the leaf arrangement. All except the Magnolia have truly whorled leaves. The leaves of Fraser Magnolia are clustered so tightly at the tips of the branches that they may also appear whorled, but on closer inspection they are actually alternate, so it's the odd one out. George Ellison's essay on Fraser Magnolia in that issue went to great lengths describing these "superficial whorls."

Whether it was difficult identifications or an obscure puzzle, we only got one response to this Brainteaser, which came from regular player and 2015 champion Sam Pratt. Sam didn't guess exactly what we had in mind, but he had obviously read George's essay, because he pointed out that the Magnolia is unique among this group because it's the only one pollinated by beetles, which is true too. So Sam is the winner for the summer issue. At the end of volume 24 we'll add up the points from each issue to see who gets a copy of George Ellison's recently published book "Literary Excursions in the Southern Highlands."

Hopefully our new brainteaser will be a little easier, and it is certainly topical this fall. There are as usual five pictures. You need to identify them by scientific and common name, and then explain which is the odd one out and why it doesn't belong.

Please address all correspondence regarding Botanical Brainteasers to joe_pollard@att.net. (That's an underscore character between first and last names.) If you prefer, send snail-mail to Joe Pollard, Biology Department, Furman University, 3300 Poinsett Highway, Greenville, SC 29605. Color photos will be posted online at <http://sabs.us/publications/chinquapin-issues>. Images are ©JK Marlow.



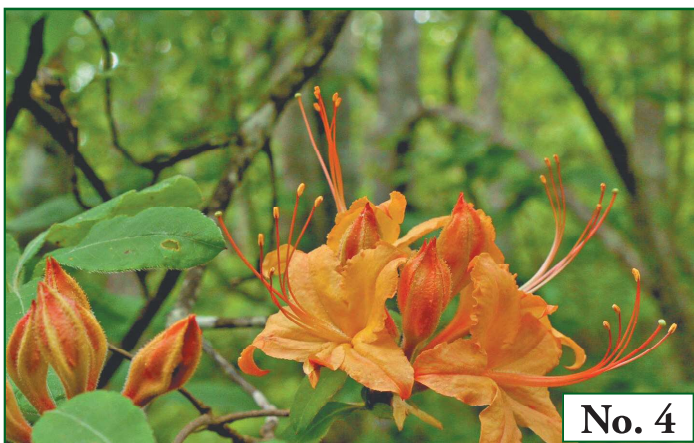
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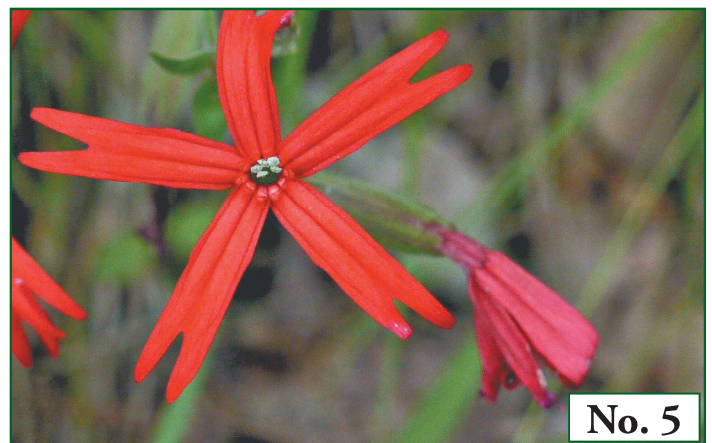
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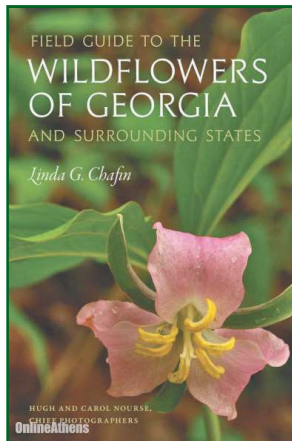
Book Corner

Field Guide to the Wildflowers of Georgia and Surrounding States

by Linda G. Chafin

(University of Georgia Press, ISBN 978-0-8203-4868-1)

Linda Chafin serves as the conservation botanist at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia. Readers of *Chinquapin* will be well acquainted with her regular columns on rare plants, though recently she has been mostly absent from our pages while devoting her time



to authoring this volume on the wildflowers of Georgia, which until this time was curiously lacking a recent, statewide field guide to wild flowers. While we have missed Linda's articles here, this outstanding new book more than makes up for that.

This article is not intended to be a full book review, but there are several noteworthy features of the book that contribute to its excellence. Over 750 species are pictured and described, with reference to more than 530 other similar species. The photographs are stunning. Kudos to Hugh and Carol Nourse, chief photographers, and an

army of other photo contributors. The descriptions are clear and lucid. The book is well constructed, printed on high quality paper, and should stand up to years of being shoved into a backpack.

The challenge for all popular wildflower guides is how to help non-specialist readers identify plants. A traditional approach has been to group flowers by color, but of course this ends up placing unrelated species in close proximity. In this book, the detailed and illustrated species accounts are grouped by botanical family, which helps to educate the reader in the patterns of variation in the plant kingdom. But then, as an identification tool, the photographs are repeated in thumbnail form, 20 to a page, now grouped by flower color. Users trying to identify an unknown could easily scan the pages of thumbnail photos, which facilitate side-by-side comparison. After settling on a tentative identification, they can then follow the page reference to the detailed description. This approach seems to combine the best of non-technical visual ID and serious plant systematics. Linda credits her inspiration to use this approach to another excellent wildflower guide, Dennis Horn and Tavia Cathcart's *Wildflowers of Tennessee, the Ohio Valley, and the Southern Appalachians*, sponsored by the Tennessee Native Plant Society and published by Lone Pine (2nd edition, 2012, ISBN 978-1551059020).

Interspersed among the wildflower descriptions are informative passages on topics ranging from general morphology to family characters to ecology and conservation. This is where Dr. Chafin really finds her own voice, providing many unique and fascinating insights that readers are sure to cherish. One minor quibble is that the book provides no compiled list or index to these essays. It seems that the reader must discover them by serendipity, and perhaps bookmark them for future re-reading.

Many thanks to Linda Chafin for this fantastic contribution! As the book points out, it will be useful not only in Georgia but throughout the southeast. I'm sure it will be cherished by all Southern Appalachian Botanists.

- Joe Pollard

Acorns continued from Page 19

Crush or cut the acorn meat into smaller pieces and boil. When the water is dark brown (every fifteen minutes or so of boiling), strain out the acorn meats and switch them to another pot of boiling water. Continue this process until the nutmeats no longer taste bitter. Three or four changes of water may be needed. For storage or further preparation allow the acorns to dry. The acorns can then be ground and used in most recipes calling for flour. Or, the puree can be eaten like oatmeal.

Got Mok?

I learned of this fascinating oak product from a Korean-American student in my Field Ethnobotany course. Mok is a traditional Korean dish, highly valued and served only on special occasions. Red oak acorns can be used in preparing mok because preparation removes almost all the bitterness. Here is the recipe.

Two cups shelled and chopped acorns

Soak these for two weeks, changing the water every other day

Using enough fresh water to cover the acorns, grind in a food processor until the acorn meat forms a coarse slurry

Pour the slurry through cheesecloth,

Pour the liquid into a quart pan

Heat to boiling with constant stirring. When the liquid thickens so it barely drops from a spoon, pour into a shallow pan to cool

After gelling, the mok can be cut into squares. The coarse acorn flour can be stored. I have kept it in the freezer for three years.

The taste? Bland as unflavored gelatin, or grits without butter, or a commencement speech. This is a highly valued Korean holiday treat but tedious to make. Today artificial mok is available. Baffled by the thunderously underwhelming taste yet the enthusiasm for the product, I asked how mok was eaten. Topped with kimchi or shrimp or crab was the reply. No wonder it tastes good. So if you plan to wow your friends with homemade mok, make certain you have tasty accompaniments with it.

Read Lytton Musselman's Edible Wild Plant blog at <http://fs.wp.odu.edu/lmusselm/>



Clockwise—fresh acorns, shelled and sectioned acorns, dried acorn flour, mok. This mok was prepared from the acorns of chestnut oak (*Quercus montana*).

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Society Awards and Grants – APPLY NOW!

The Southern Appalachian Botanical Society presents awards and grants each year at its annual meeting in April. Information on the application process can be found on the SABS web page: <http://sabs.us/awards/>.

APPLY FOR STUDENT RESEARCH FUNDS

Dr. Earl Core was a major force in the founding of the Southern Appalachian Botanical Club in 1935. The annual Earl Core Student Awards were established by the Society in 1996 to provide financial assistance in support of student research projects in plant taxonomy, systematics, and ecology. As noted on the first page of this *Chinquapin*, the maximum value of the award has just been raised to \$750. The application deadline is February 1st each year. Both students and their professor must be SABS members in order to apply. Find application information at <http://sabs.us/awards/earl-core-student-research-award/>.

APPLY FOR STUDENT PRESENTATION AWARDS

These awards recognize exceptional student presentations at the annual meeting. Each year we present two awards: the SABS Outstanding Student Poster Award and the SABS Outstanding Student Contributed Paper Award. Each award includes an honorarium of \$150, and the winners are announced at the Association of Southeastern Biologists (ASB) banquet. To submit your paper for consideration, make sure to note such as you submit your abstract to the ASB meeting. Students need to be members of SABS to receive an award.

APPLY FOR STUDENT CONFERENCE SUPPORT

SABS makes awards of \$300 to assist students attending the Association of Southeastern Biologists (ASB) meeting each year. The award is available to undergraduate and graduate students presenting a paper or poster with a botanical focus at the annual ASB/SABS meeting. Applications are due by February 6, 2017. For criteria and application forms, see <http://sabs.us/awards/student-conference-support-award/>.

HONOR A DISTINGUISHED BOTANIST

The Society annually presents the Elizabeth Ann Bartholomew award in memory of the namesake's untiring service to the public, to plant systematics, and to SABS. It is presented to individuals who have excelled in professional and public service that advances our knowledge and appreciation of the world of plants and their scientific, cultural, and aesthetic values, and/or rendered exceptional service to the society. If you feel a person deserves recognition, please submit a nomination and request others to write supporting letters. Forms are online at <http://sabs.us/awards/elizabeth-ann-bartholomew-award/>.

PUBLISH THE BEST PAPERS IN CASTANEA

The Richard and Minnie Windler Awards are designated for the best papers published in systematics and ecology during the preceding year in our journal *Castanea*. It was established by Dr. Don Windler as a memorial to his parents. If you published or will publish a paper in one of the 2016 issues, your paper will automatically be considered for the award.