



Friday & Sat., May 5 -7 DeSoto Wildflower Celebration

DeSoto is celebrating their 25th Anniversary Wildflower Weekend May 5 -7, and AWS has reserved a block of rooms for our members. Although the deadline for taking advantage of the special AWS rate has passed, it may be worth a try to call and see if you can get the same price, which is \$79/night or \$158/2 nights. Breakfast is included. Our Group ID # is 1406. Call 1-800-568-8840 toll free or 256-845-5380 to reserve your own room. Of course, you are always welcome to just come for the day on Saturday. The park address is 7104 DeSoto Parkway NE, Fort Payne, AL 35967. The Lodge is to the right on Blalock Drive. Our itinerary is as follows:

Friday: 4:00 p.m. Check In, Welcome Social at 5:00 on the Deck off the Main Lodge Dining hall, followed by dinner inside and a Presentation by park naturalists.

Saturday: 8:00 Breakfast, Main Dining Hall.

9:00 Hike to Azalea Cascade. Hike classified Easy to Moderate. Starts on DeSoto's Azalea Cascade Boardwalk and ends at the Country Store. Meets behind DeSoto's Country Store on the deck. Has the easiest terrain, suitable for people with limited mobility or younger children. Starts out along the Talmadge Butler ADA-Accessible Boardwalk Trail & continues along for both an elevated & ground-floor view of the hardwood forest. Various plants to see: Pink Lady Slipper, Mountain Laurel, Wild Ginger, Catesby's Trillium, Galax, Trout Lilly, Sweet Shrub, Mountain Honeysuckle, Yellowroot, Dwarf Iris, New York Fern, Wild Geranium, Cucumber Magnolia, Wild Azalea, and much more.

12:00 Noon ~ Lunch at the Lodge Dining Hall or on your own

1:00pm and/or 3:00pm Choice of 2 hikes, both classified as moderate to mildly strenuous.

Rhododendron Trail Hike: Goes from Country Store towards DeSoto's pool area and down the yellow trail, ending at Indian Falls. Meets at Desoto's Nature Center is great for walking under the forest canopy & among flowing creeks. Follows along the bluff line overlooking the West Fork of Little River, and ends at scenic Indian Falls. **What to see:** Catawba Rhododendron, Wild Camellia, Rosebay Rhododendron, Yellowstar Grass, Wild Huckleberry, Mountain Laurel, Trailing Arbutus, Bluets, Solomon's Seal, Catesby's Trillium, Galax, Sweet Shrub, Fringe Tree, Partridgeberry, & much more.

Little River Hike: Starts at Indian Falls, follows the yellow trail and circles back to Indian Falls. Meets outside Desoto's Country Store on grass. Terrain is rocky with some minor rock-hopping next to the river. Trail curves around & starts a gradual curve up to the bluff above Little River & ends back at Indian Falls.

What to see: Mountain Honeysuckle, Mountain Laurel, Catawba Rhododendron, Nuttall's Rayless Goldenrod, Yellowroot, Oakleaf Hydrangea, Indian Cucumber Root, Wood Sorrel, Tag Alder, Ashy Hydrangea, Oxeye Daisy, Coral Honeysuckle, Flatrock Onion, Neverwet, Royal Fern, Joe Pye Weed, Cinnamon Fern, Rattlesnake Plantain and much more.

Sunday, May 7 – Glade Hopping on Lookout Mountain!

This is an optional trip for those at the AWS meeting and for those who wish to drive up just for the day. After check-out, we'll meet in the parking lot of the Lodge at 10:30 on Sunday morning. Homeward bound, we'll travel along DeSoto Parkway (County Road 89) and HWY 35 to Little River Falls parking area to meet up with the Blanche Dean Chapter group coming from Birmingham. Estimated time of arrival for the falls is 11 a.m. From the falls, we'll travel on Canyon Rim Drive (HWY 176) through the preserve making several stops along the way. This area is rife with waterfalls, sandstone rock outcrops with thin soils, rare plant communities, and sandy bogs. Elf orpine and stitchwort will be winding down by the time of our trip, but the dwarf sundews & Little River Canyon onion should be blooming then. After the glades, we'll walk a short way to the bog to see Sampson's snakeroot, white colic root, fairy wand, sunnybells & mountain pitcher plants.

Bring plenty of water, snacks or picnic lunch, a hat, and appropriate clothing for the heat. We'll remain close to the cars for this trip. For more details, call Michelle Reynolds 914-7077 or email coverings@bham.rr.com.

Saturday May 13 -- Native Plant Workshop in Leeds. *Volunteers Needed!*

The Alabama Wildflower Society and **Green Up Nursery** at 8257 Farley Avenue in Leeds, will conduct an informal workshop called "Natives in Your Yard" on Saturday, May 13. Members of the Alabama Wildflower Society are needed to be on hand to give visitors tips on planting and maintaining native plants.

Linda Sherk is developing hand outs based on the native plants available that day. The workshop is free and open to the public. **Green Up Nursery** is next to the Post Office at 8257 Farley Avenue. Workshop begins at 10AM and ends at noon. Please email Linda at blt111@bellsouth.net if you can help.

Wednesday, May 17 -- Birmingham Fern Society Annual Lecture



The Fern Society announces that on May 17, Garrie P. Landry will speak on "**Ferns: The Rest of the Untold Story**" at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. All events are free and open to the public. All are invited to the 5:30 Reception and 6:30 Lecture .

Sunday, May 21 -- Roberta Case Pine Hills Preserve in Autauga County

The Roberta Case Pine Hills Preserve sits in the rolling hills of the upper coastal plain and contains one of the largest populations of the Alabama canebrake pitcher plant, *Sarracenia rubra ssp. Alabamensi*. Healthy populations of *Harper's ginger Hexastylis speciosa*, another plant found only in Alabama, can also be seen..

The Nature Conservancy is working to restore the upland forests to longleaf pine woodlands. Since 2001 they have had an active prescribed burning program which has opened up the understory of the forest and allowed a variety of grasses and flowers, such as the Alabama canebrake pitcher plant, to multiply. TNC has also worked to replant longleaf pines and native grasses.

Meet Linda Sherk at *Chick-fil-a* in the Promenade Shopping Center, Alabaster, on Highway 31 at 12:30PM. Or --meet the group (and Chick Byrd of the Nature Conservancy at 1PM @ exit 200 of I-65 South (gas station on right). Bring water, bug spray, sunscreen, and walking sticks. This site is on a hillside, so hiking boots or shoes with covered toes are recommended. Questions: Linda Sherk 205-415-1643 or blt111@bellsouth.net.

Saturday, June 10 -- Guided Hike to Ruffner Quarry to see False Aloe

Meet Michelle Reynolds at Ruffner Mtn. Nature Center parking lot by the pavilion, 9 a.m. Saturday, June 10.

Saturday, June 17 -- Don't miss the Birmingham Fern Society Fern Show & Sale !

Between 50 and 50 species of ferns will be available for sale. The Fern Show will be held from 1 – 4 p.m. and the Fern Sale from 1 – 5 p.m. at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens.



Saturday, June 17 -- Harrell Prairie in Forest, Mississippi

This is a joint trip with the Mississippi Native Plant Society to see Harrell Prairie's spectacular variety of wildflowers and native grasses. Located within the Bienville National Forest, the prairie boasts an unusual population of native flowers, grasses, butterflies, and neotropical birds (such as the prairie warbler, indigo bunting, blue grosbeak, yellow-breasted chats, and common yellowthroat.) Guides say that mid-June to late July is the best time to visit.

The Prairie's alkaline soils (pH >than 7.5) ensure a unique plant ecology. Common grasses include Little Bluestem, Indiangrass, Big Bluestem, Broomsedge Bluestem, Bushy Broomsedge, and Switchgrass. Other plants include Yellow Coneflower, Eastern Purple Coneflower, Blazing Star, False Boneset, Green Milkweed, Green Comet Milkweed, Purple Prairie Clover, White Prairie Clover, Aster, Tick-trefoil, Rosepink, Smooth Oxeye, Little-leaved Mountain Mint, and Wild Bergamot. Harrell Prairie (a disjunct of the Alabama Blackbelt Prairie) fortunately avoided agricultural development due to purchase by lumber companies.

The town of Forest is approximately a 3 hour drive from the Birmingham, AL area. There is a Holiday Inn Express at 1275 Hwy 35 South, Forest, MS 39074. Hotel front desk is 601-469-8288. Senior Rate is \$122.55 plus taxes. Linda Sherk has made a reservation and plans on being there Friday afternoon..

We will meet the Mississippi group on Saturday morning at 8 a.m. at Wendys (just north of the interstate exit 88 on Hwy 35) and then drive to the prairie. (From Wendy's, turn right (east) on Erle Johnston Drive and continue to its end at Hwy 501. Turn left (north) on Hwy 501, and then right (east) on Forest Service Road 518.) Bring shade hat, water, bug spray. Afterwards, we will move down the road to the red cockaded woodpecker colony. Lunch at Penn's Restaurant



Please let our Mississippi guide

know by June 12 if you want to join the group: heather.sullivan@mmns.state.ms.us. Questions ? *call*
Linda Sherk 205-415-1643 or blt111@bellsouth.net.