COVID-19 UPDATE:

All Group Events are cancelled through April 2020.

Spring Calendar

March 29th Visit to Manitou Cave

March 28 Spring Wildflowers course

March 29 “Wildflowers on the Mountain” hike

April 6 AWS - Blanche Dean April Meeting at 7 p.m.

April 4-5 Ruffner Mtn. Plant Sale

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

April 24 – 27 Take iNaturalist’s Challenge!

But, this Internet/Nature Event is Still happening!


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


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!

COVID-19 Update - Ensuring a Safe Environment

For over 40 years, Ruffner Mountain has endeavored to be a good steward to the environment and a good neighbor to our community. As a scrappy grassroots organization, we also understand that small changes can make big impacts.

With this in mind, we have made the difficult decision to close the Nature Center until Tuesday, April 7th, to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. All public and school programs will be cancelled during this time. All future programming decisions will be made on a week to week basis. Please continue to check the website for updates.

For now, our trails and the pavilion restrooms will remain open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

https://ruffnermountain.org/

Visitor Information

COVID-19 UPDATE: As of this morning (3/18/2020), it is our intention to keep the Turkey Creek Nature Preserve open, according to our normal operating hours Wed - Sun. Those hours can be found on this webpage. Please keep in mind this could change, especially if the crowds become too large to maintain proper distancing or if we are asked to do so by the Health Department. Changes will be immediately posted to our Facebook Page and on this site.

We will ask that during this time, visitors are respectful of appropriate distancing while around other visitors. This is a very difficult time for everyone and we are proud to provide a place that people and families can get out and enjoy safely. Fresh air and natural spaces are important, and we intend to provide those services as long as we can. We know you need it!

https://turkeycreeknp.com/
Tonight’s meeting was the first of the year and was again held at the Homewood Public Library. As has now been custom for a while, the year’s seminal gathering is the occasion for a potluck dinner and 2020 was no exception. The event was to commence at 6:30 p.m. but the Dean group is becoming increasingly intolerant of protocol and refinement and actually began with knife and fork at about 6:20. There was no expression of displeasure.

Sadly, President Linda Sherk has fallen ill and could not be present. Program Director Marty Shulman assumed leadership duties and insisted that the night’s program, in contrast to mealtime being modified, begin promptly at 7:00 p.m., as scheduled, and neither earlier nor later. With this action, respect was rendered to all who arrived before 7:00.

Understandably, appreciable attention was directed toward the matter of Linda’s illness. All will be kept abreast of this. There was no financial report. Announcements included mention of a visit to Manitou Cave on March 29, and a wildflower trek on Ruffner Mtn., same date, the Ruffner Plant Sale on April 4-5, and Dr. Ellen McLaughlin’s Natural History class (spring wildflowers) on March 28 at Samford University. There is a comprehensive spring event calendar in the March 2020 Newsletter. For additional information, contact President Sherk at 205-415-1643 or blt111@bellsouth.net.

Tonight’s program was a presentation exploring Alabama Power Company’s Vegetation Management Policies. The speakers were Shon Walters, Utility Arborist Supervisor for AL Power, and Brent McCain, also an Arborist Supervisor.

The usage of herbicides can be controversial and Mr. McCain was insistent that he wished to avoid discussion of the pro’s and cons of any SPECIFIC brand product, particularly ROUNDUP. It was emphasized that all products utilized by AL Power were EPA-approved and could be purchased at farm cooperative stores.

AL Power manages 246,000 acres. The company was described as being “involved with environmental values”. It often works in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service. WILDPOWER is an AL Power program promoting right-of-way corridors for greenfields and the like, the Georgia Aster being an example of AL Power’s managed wildflowers. The company is limited in the right-of-way distance they can trim. Trimming can indeed sometimes “imbalance” a tree with regard to appearance. Time and experience have shown that this matter is USUALLY corrected naturally.

The utilization of underground lines is a matter of ongoing study. Cost is a paramount issue. The future will reveal decisions and verdicts.

All of the wires on utility posts are not the property of AL Power. The company’s lines are usually at the top or immediately below. Insulation is not an inherent certainty and is the exception to the rule. On major transmission lines there is some weatherproof insulation which can handle SOME contact. BE CAUTIOUS!! DO NOT TOUCH!!

Distribution poles can handle many lines. Distribution corridors are often long, and well-trimmed, and maintained. Wildflowers benefit from the conditions.

AL Power Co. has many contracting services. State-of-the-art equipment is plentiful, including efficient helicopters, not to mention accompanying tools and vehicles.

Some of the company’s history was mentioned. The Birmingham Electric Company was purchased by AL Power in about the 1930’s. This electric entity had erected some utility poles in some rather unusual sites. This “inconvenience” is yet producing headaches and hardships.
The consuming public can assist with AL Power’s involvement with “environmental values”. One of the easiest of behaviors, in the category of prevention, is “plant the right tree at the right place”. Majestic white oaks do not mix well with electricity in the thousands of volts in an uninsulated wire.

The informative presentation and courteous interaction concluded at 8:32 p.m. The conclusion: Continue to hold the company’s feet to the fire with regard to long-range environmental preservation while simultaneously praising their expression of environmental commitment and their superb response to natural disasters and other problems.

We will once more convene on Monday, April 6, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the Homewood Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Charles E. Gleaton, Recorder

visit us on facebook as
Blanche Dean Chapter of Alabama Wildflower Society
or on our website: www.alabamawildflower.org

President - Linda Sherk . Vice President of Programs - Marty Schulman . Treasurer – Ida Gleaton
Recorder – Charles Gleaton … Chris Underwood - Newsletter & Web Site - Karen Hutchinson

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.