

CHINQUAPIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN BOTANICAL SOCIETY

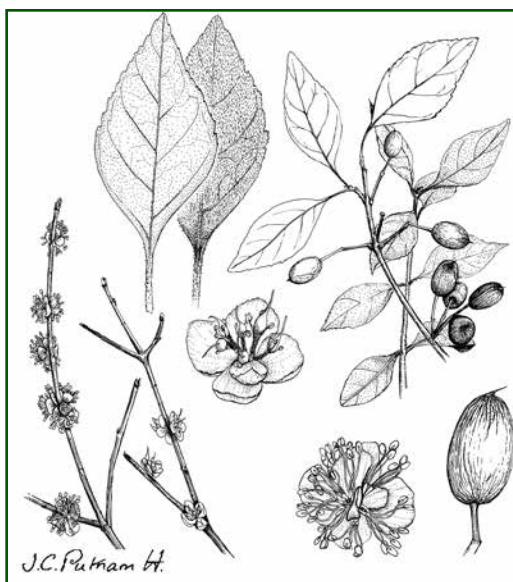
VOLUME 25 (4)
WINTER 2017



Godfrey's Privet: Will It Survive a Changing Climate?

By Linda Chafin, State Botanical Garden of Georgia,
University of Georgia, Athens

As I write this column in early January, the Atlantic seaboard is being pounded by a winter storm that is dropping snow and ice on the coastal hammocks and middens where many populations of *Forestiera godfreyi* occur, and bringing hard freezes



elsewhere in its range. As of 2016, there were only 40-50 populations of Godfrey's Privet remaining in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. Whether the plants are freeze-tolerant, and will recover in time to bloom in the coming weeks, or will even survive the wintry onslaught, remains to be seen.

Godfrey's Privet is a member of the Oleaceae family just like its fearsome relative, Chinese Privet (*Ligustrum sinense*), but it differs in several ecologically and biologically important ways. Chinese Privet famously invades and dominates wetlands of all types throughout the south. Godfrey's Privet is fastidious, requiring the calcareous soils found in coastal shell middens or inland,

limestone-based slopes. *Forestiera godfreyi* is found in southeastern South Carolina on shell middens of salt marsh hammocks and small coastal islands; in southeastern Georgia on a single, mainland shell midden near the coast; and in north Florida (both panhandle and peninsula), it occurs in rich inland forests over limestone.

Forestiera godfreyi shrubs reach 2.5 - 5 meters (8 - 16 feet) in height, with its smooth, gray trunks arching or leaning. It typically forms small, clonal stands of several stems but thickets consisting of 50-70 stems have been reported. Its leaves are opposite, 5 - 8 cm (2 - 3 inches) long and 2.3 - 4 cm (1 - 1½ inches) wide. They are oval to elliptic, usually with blunt tips and abruptly tapering bases that slightly wing the petioles. The leaf margins are finely and inconspicuously toothed above the middle. The upper leaf surfaces are smooth or slightly hairy along the midvein; the lower surfaces and petioles are uniformly hairy.

Forestiera godfreyi is dioecious, and both female and male flower clusters are held close to the stem and are surrounded by six small, pale yellow, petaloid bracts, giving each cluster the appearance of a single flower with six petals. Actually, both female and male flowers lack petals and have only four tiny, quickly deciduous sepals. Fruits are up to 0.8 - 1.2 cm (about ½ inch) long, oval, and waxy dark blue when mature. The shrubs flower mid-January to mid-February, with fruits maturing in late April and early May.

Forestiera godfreyi was named by Dr. Loran Anderson, retired but still active Florida State University botany professor, in recognition of Dr. Robert Godfrey (1911-2000), who preceded him as Director of FSU's herbarium and provided Dr. Anderson with specimens and observations that led to the species' recognition in 1985. Before then, *Forestiera godfreyi* specimens were assigned to *F. acuminata* but *F. godfreyi* flowers and fruits much earlier in the year; has smooth, dark blue fruits; and less leaf and twig pubescence. They both require calcareous soils but *F. acuminata* occurs in limestone-based swamp forests.



As with many coastal plants, Godfrey's Privet is threatened by sea level rise and hurricane intensification brought on by global climate change. Salt water intrusion, exacerbated by groundwater

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**From The Editor's Desk:****Joe Pollard, Newsletter Editor**

The year 2017 was so interesting that we just had to stretch it out a little longer. Here's the final issue in the 2017 set of *Chinquapin*. We're getting back on schedule and hope to get you four more new newsletters before 2018 is over. But for now, well ... party like it's 2017!

Speaking of the elasticity of time, this year's annual SABS/ASB meeting will be entirely within the month of March. I think that's the earliest meeting in several decades, so don't let it sneak up on you. The abstract submission deadline has already passed, but you can still register for the meeting at early-bird rates up to March 14.

In the previous *Chinquapin* we introduced a new feature – a summary of the articles in the upcoming issue of the SABS scholarly botanical journal, *Castanea*. We call it "*Castanea* Sneak Previews." There's another one in this issue. *Castanea* is now printed and mailed out only two times a year, but that doesn't mean a reduction in the number of articles, or even a longer wait, because each individual article is available online to SABS members as soon as it is reviewed, accepted, and formatted. The sneak previews won't typically appear in

every issue of *Chinquapin*. Once we settle into the new production timetable (and once I get *Chinquapin* back on its regular schedule) then they should show up in every other issue. Chris Randle and I hope that this will help you find out about the latest research published by your society.

Finally, I'd like to call everybody's attention to a small change in a part of the newsletter that you probably never pay much attention to. Over to the left we list the members of the SABS Council, and there's a new position listed in this issue. We now have a student representative on the council, and Peter Schafran is the first student member to serve in that capacity. Having a student member at the council meetings makes a lot of sense, especially as we try to increase student numbers and participation in the society. I want to offer an apology to Peter, because I should have updated the list to include him a couple of issues sooner. We're really glad you are a member of the council!

SABS Welcomes Our New Members

David Bailey
Joshua Granger
Suzanne Koptur

**NEWS FLASH****Time to Register for
Annual Meeting**

The 2018 annual meeting of the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society will take place on Wednesday, March 28, through Saturday, March 31, in conjunction with the Association of Southeastern Biologists. The venue this year is Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The speaker for the Wednesday-night plenary session is Dr. Jane Lubchenko. The Sheraton Myrtle Beach Convention Center Hotel is currently holding rooms at a special rate. The deadline for early meeting registration, at reduced rates, is March 14.

COME SEE US AT THE SABS BOOTH !!!

CASTANEA SNEAK PREVIEWS

By Chris Randle, Editor-in-Chief of *Castanea*

The March 2018 issue of *Castanea* will be a fat one. Our cover is mountain stewartia (*Stewartia ovata*), one of only four species of the Tea family (Theaceae) native to North America. While it is rare even within its range, little is known about why. In an effort to explain its rarity, Joshua Granger et al. quantified microhabitats supporting mountain stewartia, discovering that the conditions under which it grows are extremely narrow. This may aid discovery of undocumented populations of *S. ovata*.

The issue also features several articles using statistical approaches to conservation. Laurel wilt disease causes high mortality to plants of the laurel family throughout the southeastern US, but none more so than red bay (*Persea borbonia*) and swamp bay (*P. palustris*). Ambrosia beetles, the vector of this fungal pathogen, prefer large stemmed laurels. To predict the spread of laurel wilt disease, Timothy Shearman and colleagues surveyed communities in which red bay and swamp bay occur. They discovered that these species occupy different communities, with red bay relegated to the maritime forest and swamp bay occurring in a broader range of inland communities. These results should help conservationists identify communities most at risk of harboring and spreading the disease.

Invasive plants impact native communities in complex ways. Shading by *Amur honeysuckle* is likely to impact the aboveground fern flora of forests, ultimately inducing changes in the spore bank. Linda Fuselier and co-workers examined the effects of *Amur honeysuckle* invasion and removal on the fern flora and spore bank. Unexpectedly, spore bank diversity was higher in habitats harboring *Amur honeysuckle* than those where the invasive shrub had been removed, pointing to a possible legacy effect of *Amur honeysuckle* on soil characteristics.

No issue of *Castanea* would be complete without a look at how disturbance affects plant communities, including forests. Not all forms of disturbance are equivalent. Cynthia Huebner and David McGill applied sophisticated statistical approaches to understand the interaction between physical geography and disturbance. Even under a broad range of disturbance types, physiographic characteristics such as climate, soil, and aspect were more important in determining successional trajectories. However, the severity of disturbance played a role in re-establishment; the more severe the disturbance, the lower the probability of recovering native species. On the other hand, periodic disturbances such as fire are required to maintain many of the communities of the southeast, especially coastal ecosystems. Barbara Blonder and her team assessed the effects of fire management on strand ecosystems in northeastern Florida. Their findings inform management plans to preserve diverse backdune communities.

While theoretical ecology is important, ultimately restoration relies on knowledge of how plants grow and how they can be cultivated. Nathan Paris and colleagues set out to optimize propagation success of the federally threatened Price's groundnut (*Apios priceana*) while minimizing the cutting of already imperiled populations. Similarly, Jennifer Messick and Bruce Hoagland investigated germination requirements of *Penstemon oklahomensis*, a plant of conservation concern, and found that cold stratification was important for successful seedling establishment.

The herbaria of the region can reveal a wealth of knowledge to those willing to examine what they hold. Wendy Zomlefer, Richard Carter, and botanists across the southeastern US, are doing so at a grand scale through digitization projects. This collaboration has resulted in the addition of 27 previously unacknowledged species to the flora of Georgia. Most are exotic and potentially invasive.

Continued efforts to understand our flora also require more fine-

scaled examination of plants in their environment. The first manuscript to emerge from the QuillCon II Symposium at the 2016 ASB meeting examines the utility of flow cytometry in characterizing the ploidy of quillwort (*Isoetes*) populations. In this study, QuillCon II co-organizer Jay Bolin and his team discovered that despite surprising variation in the mass of nuclear DNA among diploids, mass values were predictive of ploidy levels across several species. Flow cytometry, thus, may aid in species delimitation of *Isoetes*, a notoriously difficult taxon. The spurge (*Euphorbia*) bear unusual inflorescences called cyathia. Christian Rabot and W. John Hayden have discovered a complex pollination strategy in warty spurge (*E. spathulata*), involving partial cleistogamy (self-fertilization before anthesis) followed by chasmogamy in which pollinators are able to effect outcrossing.

This March issue also features two noteworthy collections. Wild black currant (*Ribes americanum*) was rediscovered in Maryland by Coleman Minney and Andrew Landsman for the first time in 115 years. Joel Gramling and colleagues documented a population of riverbank evening primrose (*Oenothera riparia*) on the Edisto river, resulting in a new county record, and extending the distribution of this species 120 km.

If any of these articles excite you, you don't need to wait to read them. *Castanea* articles are published online, as soon as they have been through peer review and galley processing. Log in to castaneajournal.org to read these articles today.

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BOTANICAL EXCURSIONS

Rails

By George Ellison (www.georgeellison.com)

Photographs Courtesy of Gerald Ledford and Wayne Carson collections

This installment of the Botanical Excursions column is a change of pace in that its focus is railroad logging, a topic I suspect most biologists and naturalists (like me) know little enough about, even though not a few of us lead field trips or conduct studies in areas with an extensive history of logging on a massive scale. This would include, of course, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which a little over a century ago was “skinned” from its low elevation pine-oak-hickory forests up into its high elevation spruce-fir forests at just below 7,000 feet.



Loading logs in the high elevations of the Great Smokies

It's not unlikely that down through the years, as many or more books have been published about the Great Smokies region – both before and after the national park was founded in 1934 – than any other similar area in the country. Most are either informational or simply enjoyable to read in one way or another without being ground breaking.

But once in a while something will come along that'll make you sit back, scratch your head, and ask yourself: “Now where in the world did that come from?” That was my reaction upon first laying eyes on Ronald C. Sullivan's 3-volume compendium “If Rails Could Talk.”

These volumes are the first in a planned set of eight depicting the history and lore and just about anything you could imagine about railroad logging during the pre-park era on the North Carolina side of the Great Smokies and contiguous portions of the Blue Ridge province.

While many did not approve of the end result of these operations they are a crucial part of both the human and natural histories of the Smokies region. Sullivan is relating that intertwined and complex story with vigor and an astonishing blend of materials that include, in part, the basic text, excerpts from other sources, photographs, line drawings, maps, factoids, extended captions,



Champion Lumber Company's Shay locomotive no. 90, hauling logs to the mill

historical background, mini-biographies for important figures, sidebars, documents (i.e. memos of agreement, prospectuses, timelines for logging operations, railroads, etc.), a reader's guide, sources, a glossary of railroad and logging terminology, the location of long lost rail beds, abandoned equipment, and a lot more.

Asheville native Bill Hart, Jr. has been a longtime member of the board of directors for the Great Smoky Mountains Association and is the author of “3,000 Miles in the Great Smokies” (2009). Hart is also a collector of just about anything of significance written about the Great Smokies. He is of the opinion that Sullivan's work “is unique and we will never see anything like it again.”

After graduating from the University of Tennessee in 1955 Sullivan retired in 1988 from IBM. He and his wife, Marilyn, moved to Waynesville in 1994 due to its proximity to the Great Smoky

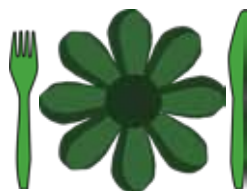


Holding pond at Sunburst sawmill, circa 1917

Mountains National Park.

Listening many years ago to a presentation by national park historian Tom Robbins concerning the absence of reliable information about railroad logging in the Great Smokies proved to be, as he says, “one of those defining moments that made me realize I want-

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Edible Wild Plants: Cattails – Second Course

by Lytton John Musselman, Old Dominion University

In my last article I discussed food made from the cattail flowers. But there is more to eat on cattails including the starchy rhizomes and the tender growing tips of the stems. Again, cattail is one of the most productive plants in wild food foraging.

Harvesting the rhizomes is dirty, mucky work. First, it is important to find a population of cattails that is not growing in contaminated water nor along a roadside that is sprayed with pesti-



Figure 1. Left, washed cattail rhizomes. Right, chopped rhizomes sautéed in buffalo fat.



cides. Mid-summer is a good time to collect. Select plants that have not flowered, they will usually have more robust rhizomes.

The rhizomes are usually not far from the soil surface but require some effort to harvest. After harvest, wash thoroughly (Fig. 1). Rhizomes have traditionally been used in two ways. They can be pounded to extract the starch to make a flour. This seems like a more troublesome way of preparing them and I have not tried it. The other way is to fry or sauté them. They are quite fibrous so cutting rhizomes into small pieces makes cooking faster and eating easier.

Wild food foragers usually have a problem finding a suitable source of oil or grease. One very healthy but time-consuming source is black walnut. Native Americans used buffalo or other animal fat. So when I mentioned this to my edible wild plants class at the University of Virginia Mountain Lake Biological Station, a student spoke up to say that in



Figure 2. Harvest of cattail stems.

his hometown there was a butcher who carried buffalo meat as well as buffalo fat! As a result, our cattail rhizomes were sautéed in buffalo fat (Fig. 1). Likely this was a better choice as black walnut has a delicious but strong flavor.

So far our cattail cuisine has included braised pistillate inflorescences, sautéed rhizomes, and pollen paddies for dessert. We are missing a salad and greens.

Harvesting the leafy stems (Fig. 2) is less onerous than collecting rhizomes. Use only stems from non-flowering or non-fruiting plants. The mature leaves of cattails are strong and fibrous and well-known material for baskets and cordage, but the very young leaves are tender and tasty. Peel away the long, mature leaves until you reach the light green or white inner leaves (Figure 3). If they can be easily torn, young leaves are tender enough to eat raw with a delicate cucumber-like taste. Steamed they are an interesting accompaniment

to a meal.

For a salad, use only the very youngest leaves. These have a slimy surface that can be washed before use in a salad.



Figure 3. Left: section of stem showing immature, green leaves in center. These are best for harvesting. Right, inner shoot of cattail stem at stage for steaming.

Plants new to science!

Botanical Brainteasers

By Joe Pollard and Janie Marlow

Joe has been mighty busy lately, so I volunteered to put the brainteasers together for this issue. (I hope he likes them.) Here is an opportunity for both new and seasoned participants to finish off Volume 25 with a lot of points (potentially enough to win the overall prize) — plus have a chance to name five new species!!! It's the chance of a lifetime.

What you need to do is 1) for two points, provide the scientific names of two plants in each photo; 2) then (for two more points), ignoring the fact that each picture actually shows two plants, submit a Latin and a common name for the “undescribed plants” that the camera appears to have captured.

The former will be judged, of course, on accuracy; the latter on appropriateness and creativity.... 3) And, in keeping with tradition, tell us which picture is the odd one out and why (for two more points).

Send your answers to joe_pollard@att.net (that's an underscore character between first and last names). Email is strongly preferred, as Joe is out of the office a lot. Color photos will be posted online at <http://sabs.us/publications/chinquapin-issues>. Images are ©JK Marlow.

Our fall Brainteasers [Chinquapin 25(3)] were (1) *Thalictrum thalictroides* (rue-anemone), (2) *Anemone quinquefolia* (wood anemone), (3) *Delphinium tricorne* (dwarf larkspur), (4) *Fragaria virginiana* (wild strawberry) and (5) *Clematis virginiana* (virgin's bower). Number 3 looks SO different from the rest, but in fact it's in the Ranunculaceae like nos. 1, 2, & 5, and almost anything in that family is poisonous. Despite the superficial similarity to the other white flowers, number 4 is in the Rosaceae and is deliciously edible. So it's the odd one out. We received 8 entries this time and most everybody got the idea. The first person to correctly identify them all was Sam Pratt, so we declare Sam to be the winner!



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ed to write this book series.” With the input of Marilyn and their friend Gerald (Jerry) Ledford, that long ago moment has started to become a reality with the publication of these initial volumes:

Vol. 1. “Crestmont & Champion Fibre: Logging the North Carolina Great Smoky Mountains.” A volume that depicts operations in the rugged Big Creek area in the far northeastern corner of the Smokies near I-40.

Vol. 2. “Sunburst & Champion Fibre: Logging in the North Carolina Great Balsams.” The history of railroads and logging in the Pigeon River gorge and what are now Shining Rock and Middle Prong Wilderness Areas.

Vol. 3. “Quinlaintown and Champion Fibre: Logging in the North Carolina Balsams.” The story of how a small pulp mill evolved into the paper mill at Canton NC.

It’s doubtful if Sullivan could have come up with two assistants better suited to his requirements than his wife Marilyn and his friend Jerry, who noted that Marilyn “was right there on the trail during the rail exploration bushwacking days and continues to work to bring these books to life.”

Ledford, who was the band director in Henderson NC county before retiring, grew up in a railroad logging family hearing the stories and observations old-timers passed down at family gatherings. In his acknowledgements section Sullivan says of Ledford: “His knowledge of logging company activities in western North Carolina is without peer.”

So as to provide some notion, albeit limited, of the varied content encountered in these volumes, I’ll conclude with several excerpts selected more or less at random:

“Steam-powered skidders changed the way logs were transported from the woods to log landings. Early models were called groundhog skidders, and they were used to drag logs along the ground from the cutting site located up to a quarter of a mile away. Later models were called overhead skidders. These utilized heavy cables strung between the skidder’s vertical steel spar and a ‘tail tree’—a tall tree that has its top cut off and limbs removed [that was] located up to a mile away. This system utilized a skidding carriage that traveled back and forth along the cable system, allowing the skidder operator to bring loads of logs above the ground directly to the landing. [Nevertheless] as often as not, the logs were dragged along the ground, leaving long deep scars that remain to this day.”

“The manufacture of concentrated tannin extract, as it is known today, first originated in France in the early seventies (i.e. the 1870s) and was made from chestnut wood... American chestnut (Castanea dentata) contains about the same percentage of tannin as the chestnut which grows in France (C. sativa) ... but the tannin color obtained from the extract of American chestnut is not as light... In the storage yards of Champion

Fibre Company there are upwards of \$400,000 in the value of wood alone. This quantity represents a six month’s supply of wood for a production of five hundred barrels of tannin extract per day, which is equivalent to 63,000 pounds of pure tannin extract per day.”

“Between the 1880s and the late 1920s more than two dozen logging companies, a wood pulp company, and a dozen or so railroad companies tried their hand at making a fortune in two western NC counties known then and now as Haywood and Swain counties... The town of Canton and its pulp/paper mill was the only one of these towns to survive.”

“On the day before Thanksgiving (1925) an enormous forest fire started [in the Shining Rock and Graveyard Fields areas now traversed or accessed by the Blue Ridge Parkway] that burned for nearly three weeks ... Altogether more than 25,000 acres were consumed by the fire, leaving almost no trees ... The railway lines in the high country were destroyed, rails were deformed, ties were turned into ashes, and trestles [destroyed]... One account stated that the fire claimed three logging camps, several American loaders, skidders, jack loaders, fourteen head of horses and oxen together with their stables and barns, bunk-houses, filers’ shacks, etc.”

(Note:--Each of the “If Rails Could Talk” volumes is priced at \$40 and are currently available from the Tarheel Press in Hickory NC: www.tarheelpress.com. This “Botanical Excursions” column is the revision and expansion of a column originally published in George Ellison’s “Nature Journal” column in the “Asheville (NC) Citizen Times.”)

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pumping from coastal wells, has also killed some Godfrey’s Privet populations, as have pot-hunters plundering shell middens. At this point, we can only hope that the remaining populations make it through this winter.

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SABS Committees – A note of appreciation, and an opportunity!

The work of running the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society is done by a group of dedicated people, including the elected officers of the society, other members of the SABS Council, and the Editorial Board. The officers and council are listed on the inside front cover of every Chinquapin. The current membership of the Editorial Board was outlined in our recent summer issue (vol. 25, no. 2, p. 10). The process by which these positions are chosen is explained in our Constitution and Bylaws, available online at www.sabs.us.

In addition, SABS has many special-purpose committees. Much of their work happens in the background and gets little appreciation. We are listing the names of committee-members here to recognize and applaud their effort. But this is also a plea for volunteers. As you scan the lists, you will see that many of the committee slots are currently filled by officers and council-members, sometimes serving on multiple committees. In only a few cases is council membership required by the bylaws (for example, the Finance Committee must consist of the Treasurer and two additional officers of the council). However, for most committees there are no such restrictions, and the Council has expressed a desire to have broader representation of the society membership on its committees. It's a great way for members to take a first step in society leadership.

If you are an SABS member and interested in serving on a committee, just contact the President or any member of the Nominating Committee. Or stop by the SABS booth at the ASB meeting in Myrtle Beach and put your name and interests on the volunteer sign-up sheet. We want your help and ideas to make our society exciting and strong!

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Nominating Committee: Charles Horn (chair), Steph Jeffries, Lisa Wallace, Jonathan Horton

Symposium Committee: Chris Randle (chair), Peter Schafran

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Representative to the Great Smoky Mountains Wildflower Pilgrimage: Pat Cox