



### What's Blooming in the Piedmont of NC?

Sumac	<i>Rhus spp.</i>	3-Apr	151	1-Sep
Smartweed	<i>Persicaria spp.</i>	4-Jul	126	7-Nov
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago spp.</i>	8-Aug	67	14-Oct
Aster	<i>Aster spp.</i>	25-Sep	35	30-Oct

**AUGUST 2014**  
**NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMANCE COUNTY BEEKEEPERS**

*Alamance County Beekeepers*

**This month's meeting...**Our annual Ice Cream Social on Saturday, August 16, 2014.

**Place:** Don and Shirley Moore's, 3634 Stoney Creek Church Rd., Elon, NC.

**Time:** 3:00 PM - - whenever

Preparation and Set-Up

Don needs six volunteers to arrive around 2:30 PM to set up tents, tables and chairs.

Actual Program Meeting

3:00 PM – Bee Program by Don Hopkins, Nancy Rupert and Don Moore:

**Inspection and treatment for Varroa mites**

5:00 PM – Ice Cream and Goodies

Breakdown

At the conclusion of meeting, Don needs six volunteers to take down and put away tents, tables and chairs.

### **National Honey Bee Day, August 16, 2014**

There is also another Saturday morning event planned to celebrate **National Honey Bee Day** <<http://www.nationalhoneybeeday.com>>. The theme this year is "Sustainable Gardening Begins with Honey Bees." The Extension Master Gardeners Volunteers from Guilford County and the Guilford County Beekeepers' Association are holding this event from 9:00 AM - Noon at the Guilford County Cooperative Extension Center, 3309 Burlington Rd, Greensboro, NC.



**Next month's meeting:** On September 18<sup>th</sup>, South Central NC Bee Inspector Nancy Ruppert will be giving the program on "To feed or not to feed." THIS WILL BE A POT LUCK DINNER. So plan on bringing your best dish at 6:00 PM and enjoy a meal with your fellow beekeepers at the Alamance County Center. We are excited that Nancy will be our speaker that night, so let's show her our support.

We will also have a Honey Tasting Event sometime during the meeting. If you want to participate in the honey tasting event, please pick up an empty small bear for your honey. Paul Jollay will be donating these bears at the Ice Cream Social. Do not put your name or label on your entry, since we will assign a number to each bear for judging. Bears will also be available for filling with your honey before the meeting.

Also, if we have time at the September meeting, we will draw questions out of a box that our members have submitted concerning honey bees. Charles Black saw this mentioned in a Bee Culture magazine and I think it's a good idea. It's something we can do at each meeting. We can provide an index card for your questions. (Submitted by *Ira Poston*)

## Heritage Day at Cedar Rock Park (Volunteers please)

Saturday, August 23rd will be Heritage Day at Cedar Rock Park. If you are joining Mike Ross and his team for this event, please make sure Mike knows you are coming so that he can plan his schedule for the day. It runs from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM, with entertainment provided by C and J Bluegrass Band.

Mike needs volunteers to help set up the bee cage, tables and other display material starting around 8:00 AM. Volunteers are also needed to take a turn in the cage with the bees. You can sell honey during the event and offer free tastings.

Mike plans to start on Thursday preparing a hive to use in the cage by moving it or maybe just one brood box with a queen to a new location in his apiary. This allows the older (field or forager bees) to return to their original hive location. As a result mostly gentle nurse bees are brought for use in the cage.

Mike is hopeful that one of you can make up an observation hive and bring it. Please let Mike know if you can help by an email to <mross953@hotmail.com> or call him at 336-214-4219.

## Farm to Table Event at Cedar Rock

The annual **Farm to Table** event this year is scheduled for Tuesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> and Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> (rain dates: September 30 & October 1). Mike Ross will be asking for volunteers at the September meeting. Please mark these dates in you calendars.

## Cooperative Extension's Pollinator Garden in Pittsboro

**Bee** sure to take a few minutes to view the spectacular images of critters that visit the Chatham Mills Pollinator garden posted by Debbie Roos at: <<http://go.ncsu.edu/diversity-in-pollinator-garden>>

## Smartweed: A Fall Nectar and Pollen Source in the Piedmont of NC



This photo of Pennsylvania Smartweed (*Persicaria pensylvanicum*) was taken October 2013 on the campus of Elon University.

During the months of August, September, October and November, Smartweed is listed as a fall nectar and pollen source of honey bees and native pollinators in addition to Goldenrod and Asters. In the past smartweed was assigned to the genus *Polygonum*, but it is now assigned to the genus *Persicaria* that includes 150 species. Smartweed, along with Sorrel, Rhubarb and Buckwheat are members of the Buckwheat or Knotweed plant family. The collected nectar from Smartweed, once processed by honey bees, results in honey that is dark in color with a characteristic buckwheat flavor. Pennsylvania Smartweed is a herbaceous summer annual that is distributed throughout the entire United States.

This plant can be easily found growing in unattended roadside ditches, disturbed areas, and bottomlands composed of soils of all drainage types.

Unfortunately this plant is considered by many to be a “common weed” that needs to be removed from their yards and gardens mechanically or with herbicides.

At maturity the plants are about 3 ½ feet in height with branched stems that are often reddish in color and swollen at the nodes. The leaves are arranged alternately along the stem, lance-shaped in outline and often have a triangular reddish blotch in the middle of upper leaf surface. Flowers are clustered in terminal spikes at the ends of stems. Individual flowers are small and usually pink in color but can occasionally be white. Botanically speaking, the individual flowers have no distinct sepals or petals, but are fused into one structure called a tepal.



Some Smartweed species are an excellent wildlife food plant, especially for waterfowl. According to the USDA, twenty species of ducks, geese, bobwhites, mourning doves, ring-necked pheasants, and four species of rails, as well as 30 nongame birds, eat the seeds. Dense stands of Smartweed provide cover for young waterfowl, marsh birds, and wintering pheasants. White-footed mice, muskrat, raccoons, and fox squirrels eat plants and/or seeds.

Smartweed is sometimes referred to as nature’s pepper and pharmacy. If you taste the plant you will be treated to a peppery taste that has been described as biting into a piece of burning paper. According to the Native American Ethnobotany website maintained by the University of Michigan – Dearborn, Native American groups had various uses for this plant. The Chippewa used it as a treatment for epilepsy. The Iroquois used it to treat horse colic. The Menominee drank a leaf infusion for postpartum healing. The Meskwaki used it on bleeding hemorrhoids. The Native American Ethnobotany is a database of plants used as drugs, foods, dyes, fibers, and more used by native Peoples of North America. One note of caution: sap from this plant may cause dermatitis.

Who would have imaged that a common garden and yard weed like Smartweed could provide a rich source of nectar and pollen to bees as well as a wildlife plant food.

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