



## Shakerag Hollow: a Place of Experience, a Point of Understanding

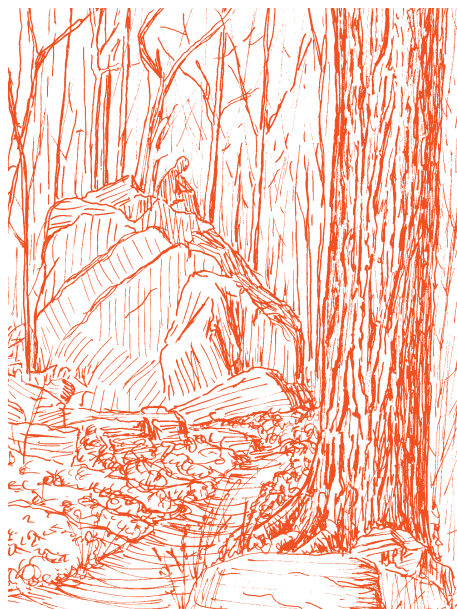
*Ed. note: Rowan Jones, a senior in the college, is Sewanee's first Arts and Humanities Environmental Studies major. For his capstone project, he is focusing on Shakerag Hollow. He plans to read all he can find, conduct interviews, and make regular treks to the Hollow to watch the springtime unfurl. Rowan has agreed to share some of his experiences via the Sewanee Herbarium blog at <http://sewaneeherbarium.wordpress.com>, so we'll be able to follow him as he explores what Shakerag means to Sewanee. His first post is reprinted here. —MPP*

February, 18th. I have chosen my point of contemplation to be upon a massive sandstone boulder along the Perimeter Trail. My spot must have detached and tumbled to its resting place some hundred thousand years ago, leaving a hole in the mountainside and a notch in the belt of Sewanee trails. This piece of Shakerag Hollow upon which I perch has been an important part of the landscape for generations of walkers and climbers who have clambered up its accommodating, stepping-stone face to recline in this very spot; who have brushed its cool roughness with their fingertips as they tramped by; or who have slapped the blue swatch of paint on its rocky surface denoting the continuation of the Perimeter Trail, absent-mindedly upholding a long tradition.

On this warm February afternoon, which began bright and sunny but has darkened in cloudy overcast, I can see straight across to the other side of the cove where I went to high school at Saint Andrew's-Sewanee School, conjuring up the walks and bike rides I took through these woods as a young student. Before me stand seven straight, glorious shagbark hickories, their sides peeling away like ancient wall paper;

countless mighty red and white oaks; several soft and crooked beech trees, somewhat rare in these parts nowadays, and, as Mary Priestley so delightfully put it, many "deliciously milk chocolate and lavender black walnuts."

The wind is strong today, blowing the last cold-tolerant seeds from the heights of sugar maples and yellow poplars before spring time, and swinging about the thick ropey grape vines that cling and snake



their paths around the forest. I hear the shallow moan of the wind blowing road and machine sounds to echo around the Hollow, penetrating the wilderness with the hum of civilization. I have not seen any walkers out today to witness the first peeks of spring — deep green and maroon leaves of crane fly orchid or the charming salt and pepper flowers, as well as several other evergreens and newcomers.

From my point of contemplation I intend to silently observe the woods and its

passersby, emulating the Emersonian "transparent eye-ball," allowing me a 360 degree view of this particular piece of Shakerag Hollow and its creatures, human and non-human alike, bearing in mind an ethic similar to that of David Haskell in his forest mandala. For this place vibrates with the energy of life and experience, a John Muir-esque earthen cathedral for those drawn to the woods in order to attain peace and familiarity they would not achieve otherwise.

The spirit of God possesses this place and He can be heard in birdsong, seen in green lusciousness, smelled in wildflower sweetness, and felt by its vibrant energy. It is imbued with so many experiences. In my study I hope to research and collaborate as much as I can from this voice of experience of walkers, faculty members and students of the University of the South, and locals of Sewanee, as well as from the Hollow itself, in order to compose a collage of what this magnificent, mystical place is and what it means to those who care for it. For, as Annie Armour, University Archivist, class of '75 put it, "[Shakerag is] quiet. It's beautiful. It's a safe haven of sorts." What about Shakerag makes it a "cathedral of nature" and a "safe haven" over other places? This is what I seek to illuminate.

The sun is setting, lighting up the adjacent side of the plateau, dousing me and the woods in shadow and bathing the land opposite me in a milky tangerine. Suddenly my pencil stops and I am no longer able to summon the words necessary to convey the essence of this wild and beautiful world.

—Rowan Jones, C'13

# Why Water Plants Don't Drown: Survival Strategies of Aquatic & Wetland Plants

by Victoria I. Sullivan  
Illustrations by Susan E. Elliott



**F**looding is a serious problem for plants. As with humans, when plants (and plant roots, in particular) that normally live out of water are submerged underwater, they suffocate. But plants that naturally live in wet places don't die! How are they able to survive in water when upland plants cannot? Sullivan explains how water plants have adapted strategies for overcoming the hazardous conditions of living in water.

*Why Water Plants Don't Drown* begins with an introduction to the basic biological and ecological requirements of all plants (gas exchange, exposure to light, structural support, and reproduction). Sullivan goes on to describe how aquatic plants (Divers, Floaters, and Floating-Leaf Plants) meet those requirements. The second part of the book covers emergent wetland plants, which Sullivan refers to as Waders (plants that only get their "feet" wet).

Adaptations for living in the water evolved at different times and from unrelated groups of upland plants. Sullivan's clear explanations and Elliott's lively illustrations make it effortless and fun to understand how plants adapted to living in water. Sullivan draws from her years of teaching and field experience to illuminate fascinating biological details of the many example species she includes for each category of water plants.

The intriguing insights and colorful artistic interpretations will make any nature enthusiast eager to explore aquatic and wetland plant ecology.

—from the webpage of Pinyon Publishing Company, <http://pinyon-publishing.com/whywater.html>.

## THE SEWANEE PLANT PRESS

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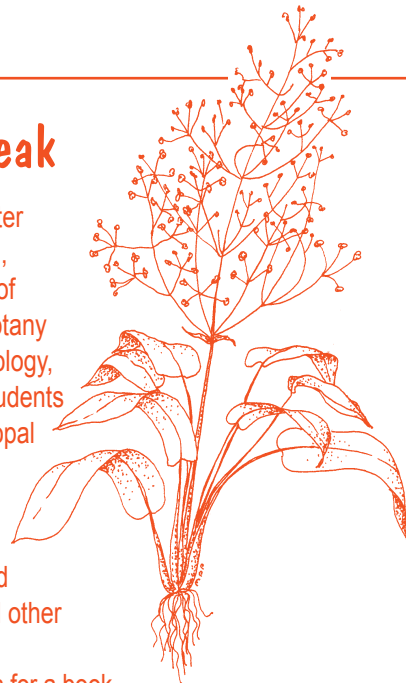
Drawings, by Mary Priestley, are of  
Shakerag Hollow, cattails, water plantain,  
toothwort, bloodroot, and trillium.

## Victoria Sullivan to Speak

The Herbarium is pleased to sponsor "Why Water Plants Don't Drown," a lecture by Victoria Sullivan, at 4:30 PM Thursday, April 11, in the Torian Room of DuPont Library. Dr. Sullivan taught biology and botany at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and biology, environmental studies, and physical science to students at both Teurlings Catholic High School and Episcopal School of Acadiana in Louisiana. She was also a naturalist with the U.S. National Park Service in the Everglades National Park, worked in Fairchild Tropical Garden, Miami, Florida, and has authored at least 25 papers about *Eupatorium*, thistles, and other plants.

In 2009, she translated her grandmother's letters for a book she entitled *Granny's Letters: A Georgia Wiregrass Pioneer Woman's Tragedy*. This past year, her novel titled *Adoption* was published. Dr. Sullivan is owner, publisher, and editor of Border Press, an independent press she established several years ago, to publish quality fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Recently she was honored by having a new plant species, *Eupatorium sullivaniae*, named for her!

Please join us for what promises to be an interesting talk. Copies of Dr. Sullivan's book, as well as notecards by the book's illustrator, will be available for purchase. —MPP



# Spring Calendar of Events

## Roark's Cove – Sun., April 7, 1:30 PM – Yolande Gottfried

A private property at the base of the plateau is being made available for a wildflower walk to see some species not seen on the upper plateau, such as Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) and possibly some early shooting star (*Dodecatheon meadia*), as well as trilliums and much more. Meet at the Sewanee tennis courts parking lot (on Green's View Road behind the Sewanee Inn site) to carpool or caravan to the location of this easy to moderate walk.

## "Why Water Plants Don't Drown" in the Torian Room – Thurs., April 11, 4:30 PM – Victoria L. Sullivan

The author will talk about her new book, *Why Water Plants Don't Drown: Survival Strategies of Aquatic and Wetland Plants*, explaining how some plants adapted strategies for overcoming the hazardous conditions of living in aquatic and wetlands habitats. Copies of the book and notecards of the illustrations will be available for purchase. The Torian Room is on the mezzanine of the duPont Library on the front of the building.

## Trails & Trilliums – Fri.–Sun, April 12–14

This year's 10th "perennial" Trails and Trilliums event plans to include hikes in Shakerag Hollow and the South Cumberland State Recreation Area, including Collins Gulf, as well as bird walks led by David Haskell. T&T is sponsored by the Friends of the South Cumberland and held at

the Monteagle Sunday School Assembly. Go to [trailsandtrilliums.org](http://trailsandtrilliums.org) for more information.

## Shakerag Hollow – Sun., April 21, 1:30 PM – Mary Priestley

This is Sewanee's "Mecca" for wildflower lovers,



and the flowers should be diverse and abundant. Meet at the Green's View parking lot (past the golf course). 2 miles, moderate to strenuous, with one fairly challenging incline.

## Collins West – Sat., April 27, 9:30 AM – Mary Priestley

This section of the South Cumberland State Recreation Area is the only other local spot on the plateau that rivals Shakerag Hollow for number and diversity of spring wildflowers. Meet at the Collins West trailhead, just beyond the Swiss-Memorial School in Gruetli-Laager. Bring lunch

and extra water. 6 miles, strenuous. For directions to Collins West contact the South Cumberland State Park Visitors' Center (931.924.2980).

## Garlic Mustard Pull – Sun., April 28, 1:30 PM – Mary Priestley

Join in an attempt to control this invasive exotic plant that is threatening to take over some sensitive areas of our forest. It is easy to pull (even good to eat when young and tender!). No equipment is necessary but work gloves would be a good idea. Meet at Morgan's Steep.

## Piney Point – Sat., May 4, 1:30 PM – George Ramseur

The community of plants that grows on the sandstone outcrops along the trail to Piney Point, including the rare elf orpine, is a specialty of Dr. Ramseur's. Join him for this moderate one-to-two hour walk, meeting at the tennis courts at St. Andrew's-Sewanee School (beyond the football field).

All times are CST or CDT.

Wear appropriate shoes on all of these walks. Risks involved in hiking include physical exertion, rough terrain, forces of nature, and other hazards not present in everyday life. Picking flowers and digging plants are prohibited in all of the above-mentioned natural areas.

For more information on these or other Sewanee Herbarium events, please contact Yolande Gottfried at the Herbarium (931.598.3346) or by email at [ygottfri@sewanee.edu](mailto:ygottfri@sewanee.edu). Directions are available on the Herbarium website, [lal.sewanee.edu/herbarium/](http://lal.sewanee.edu/herbarium/), under the calendar of events.

## Friends of the Sewanee Herbarium

The Friends of the Sewanee Herbarium support the work of the Herbarium: education, research, and conservation. A \$10.00 annual contribution would be very much appreciated. The date of your most recent contribution is printed on your address label.

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Others who might like to receive *The Sewanee Plant Press*: \_\_\_\_\_

## Trails and Trilliums



The Herbarium is once again participating in the annual Trails and Trilliums celebration, scheduled this year for April 12-14. The event is sponsored by the Friends of South Cumberland State Park and held on the historic Monteagle Sunday School Assembly grounds. It features wildflower hikes, workshops, sales of native plants, an artwork show and sale, and

lots of children's activities. **Pre-event activities include three one-day nature journaling workshops by artist Lendon Noe and a talk Thursday afternoon on "Why Plants Don't Drown," sponsored by the Herbarium.** (See the article elsewhere in this newsletter about the latter.)

A highlight of the 2013 event will be a keynote address by David Haskell, author of the acclaimed book, *The Forest Unseen*, on Saturday night during Wine & Wildflowers. Haskell, who will also lead guided walks on Saturday and Sunday, will be honored as the recipient of the Yeatman Environmental Education Award. The Trails & Trilliums Tribute Award will be presented to those who have worked to bring the invaluable Tennessee Naturalist Program to our state.

Key events of the three-day festival include 15 varied hikes on some of the South Cumberland's most beautiful trails, a great selection of native plants, the "Brush with Nature" preview party / art sale on Friday night, the Cumberland Wild panel discussion on "Parks Without People?" as well as music and vendors. A focus on families continues during Trails & Trilliums. "Ramble," the State Parks' raccoon mascot, will be on hand along with native critters and an introduction to rock climbing, activities aimed to spark kids' interest in wildlife, woods and wonder.

Proceeds from the weekend support South Cumberland State Park, the largest state wilderness park in Tennessee. See [trailsandtrilliums.org](http://trailsandtrilliums.org) for more information.

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