

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

To help with the
**BLACK COHOSH SUSTAINABLE
HARVEST STUDY**
near
REDDISH KNOB, VIRGINIA
24-26 JUNE 2007



The USDA Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Garden Club of America invite you to participate in important native medicinal plant monitoring project.

What is black cohosh?

Black cohosh (*Actaea (=Cimicifuga) racemosa*) grows only in the Appalachian Mountains. Also called fairy candles, after its long white flowers, black cohosh is sometimes used in landscaping. The common name, cohosh, comes from the Algonquian Indian word meaning 'rough,' which describes the dark, hard, and gnarly rhizome. An erect forest perennial, it grows to about 3 feet tall with a two foot spread. The plant tolerates a variety of soils, but prefers rich cove habitats and is hardy in USDA hardiness zones 4A to 10A. Vegetative reproduction is by budding from underground rhizomes. Mature plants set seed as early as June and continue well into August.

Why monitor black cohosh?

Black cohosh root is widely sought after to treat menopausal symptoms, a use which was passed down through Native American tradition. Each fall black cohosh root is harvested for the commercial market. In 2001, approximately 92 tons of black cohosh were harvested from forests of eastern United States (Predny, et al. 2006). Between 2002 and 2003, sales of black cohosh rose 26% (Uhland, et al. 2004). As of 2000, NatureServe (www.natureserve.org/explorer) gives black cohosh a secure global heritage conservation ranking, noting that increased market demand has put greater pressures on wild populations. **Nearly 100% of black cohosh is harvested from the wild.** The effect of wild-harvest on black cohosh populations is not well understood.

More about these projects...

These organizations have been working together as part of the Medicinal Plant Working Group (MPWG; www.nps.gov/medicinal) since 2000 to establish long-term sustainable harvest research sites for black cohosh in eastern United States. The sustainable harvest studies are designed to allow volunteers to participate in activities that contribute to the sustainable use and conservation of important medicinal plants on public lands. Volunteers help collect the data necessary to improve our understanding of the impact that harvesting has on plant populations of this important native medicinal plant.



You are Invited!

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Workplan: The study is conducted over a 2.5 day period.

Day 1: Sunday, 24 June, 3 p.m [tentative time, doublecheck with Jim Chamberlain]: Meet at the Village Inn (see accommodations, below) for training session on plant identification, procedures and study protocols. Reception and dinner will follow.

Day 2: Monday, 25 June, approx. 7 a.m.: Caravan/carpool to the study site (about 45 minutes away). Begin data collection. Eat lunch at the study site [bring your own food]. Time and weather permitting, we may go swimming after work. Return to the hotel in time for dinner, though it may be late. Plan on working late and through inclement weather. Safety first, though!

Day 3: Tuesday, June 26, approx. 7.a.m.: Continue working until all plots have been sampled. Please plan on working as late as possible. All plots must be sampled. If you leave early, then it will mean more work for others.

For more on this project, visit <http://www.nps.gov/plants/medicinal/projects/2005virginia.htm>.

Location: The Reddish Knob study site is located on the Dry River Ranger District of the George Washington Jefferson National Forest. Located in the Shenandoah Mountains, near the West Virginia border, the study site is just off the road, easily accessible and fairly flat.

Accommodations: The closest hotel is the Village Inn (540-434-7355 or 800-736-7355), located 2 miles North of I-81 Exit #240 on Rt. 11 [4979 South Valley Pike, Harrisonburg, VA 22801]. There is a restaurant associated with the Inn, making meals convenient. A block of rooms are reserved for this group under the name "Reddish Knob." The rates are: \$69 for a Queen, \$75 for 2 double beds (good for room sharing!). Other hotels are available in Harrisonburg, but they are less convenient to the study site. Camping is available on the national forest; check the District's website for information (http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/gwj/northriver/recreation/camping/north_river.shtml).

What you need: Work boots, long pants, sunscreen, hat, rain gear [*a must!*], insect repellent, water, lunch, snacks, a sense of adventure and civic duty. No restrooms are available, so prepare appropriately. Bring your camera – great photo opportunities! (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/gwj/northriver/index.shtml>).

Questions: Jim Chamberlain, USDA Forest Service, Blacksburg, VA 540-231-3611 or jachambe@vt.edu

PLEASE RSVP by APRIL 15TH [after taxes!] so that we can plan accordingly.