

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

To help on the
BLACK COHOSH SUSTAINABLE HARVEST STUDY
Near
REDDISH KNOB, VIRGINIA

16-19 JUNE 2011

The USDA Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Garden Club of America invite you to participate in monitoring an important native medicinal plant, black cohosh (*Actaea* (= *Cimicifuga*) *racemosa*). Black cohosh root is wild-harvested for use in combating menopausal symptoms. These organizations have been working together as part of the Medicinal Plant Working Group (MPWG; <http://www.nps.gov/plants/medicinal/workinggroup.htm>) for over 7 years 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. For more information on the project, visit <http://www.nps.gov/plants/medicinal/projects/2005virginia.htm>

Black cohosh is an erect forest perennial that grows to about 3 feet tall with a two foot spread. The common name comes from the Algonquian Indian word meaning 'rough,' which describes the dark, hard, and gnarly rhizome. The plant tolerates a variety of soils, but prefers rich cove habitats – cool, well-drained, moist, semi-shaded woodlands. Greater understanding of the impact that harvesting has on plant populations is needed. Volunteers are needed to help collect the data necessary to improve our knowledge of this important medicinal plant.

The hard work, dedication and significant feedback from volunteers have helped make this program a success. In 2008 the program was expanded by adding another set of replicate plots at Reddish Knob strengthening statistical support of the data. Research on light requirements began in 2009. A Certificate Training Program for Volunteer Citizen Scientists was established in 2010 for participants attending the entire workshop. The continued support of concerned citizens and these agencies is creating a database of information which will be used to determine best management practices for black cohosh and its responsible sustainable harvest for future generations.

General Plan: Please read over the tentative agenda to determine which days/times best fit your schedule. Note: All times are approximate.

Day 1: Thursday, June 16th 8 a.m. [approx., check with Jim Chamberlain]: Leave from Brooks Center office on VT Campus Blacksburg, VA



Day 1: Thursday, 11:30-12:30 p.m. [approx.] Arrive at Reddish Knob (west of Harrisonburg, VA.) Lunch at site.

Day 1: Thursday, 1:00-4:30p.m.: Training and reconnaissance of study plots to prepare for black cohosh treatment and inventory.

Day 1: Thursday evening: Dinner and fellowship at base camp.

Day 2: Friday, June 17th approx. 8:00 a.m.-5p.m.: Caravan/carpool from base camp to the study site, begin data collection. Eat lunch at the study site. Plan on working late and through inclement weather. Safety first, though!

Day 2: Friday evening: Dinner and fellowship at base camp.

Day 3: Saturday, June 18th approx. 8:00 a.m.-5p.m.: Caravan/carpool from base camp to the study site. Lunch at study site. We will continue to work on the site until all plots have been sampled. Please plan on working until all plots are done or as late as possible, as all plots must get done.

Day 4: Sunday, June 19th approx. 8:00 a.m. -5p.m.: Finish study plots. After lunch at the study site [bring your own food]. Group will caravan up the mountain to scenic vista, then return to break camp, pack, and return home either Sunday evening or Monday morning.

Location: The Reddish Knob study site, located on the Dry River Ranger District of the George Washington Jefferson National Forest. It is located in the Shenandoah Mountains, west of Harrisonburg, VA., near the West Virginia border. The site is just off the road, easily accessible and roadway is fairly flat. Study plots are along the hillside.

Accommodations: The closest hotel is the Village Inn (540-434-7355 or 800-736-7355). It is 2 miles North of I-81 Exit #240 on Rt. 11 [4979 South Valley Pike, Harrisonburg, VA 22801]. Other hotels are available in Harrisonburg, but they are less convenient to the study site. Camping is available on the national forest; please check the District's website for Todd Lake Campsite information. There is hiking and swimming at Todd Lake. Camping site fee of \$ 12.00. http://www.trails.com/tcatalog_trail.aspx?trailid=HGD109-029&source=TRL&oc=4692&track=1

What you need: Work boots, long pants, sunscreen, hat, water bottle, insect repellent, lunch, snacks, rain gear [a must]; a sense of adventure and civic duty. No restrooms are available on the trail so prepare appropriately.

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

