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As I take time to reflect on our growth in recent years, I am both thrilled and grateful for the many friends, advocates and supporters who help sustain our mission. We could not do the work we all value so much were it not for your help.  Our [collaborative red spruce restoration project](https://www.fws.gov/southeast/articles/women-lead-the-effort-on-appalachian-mountain-top-forests/) continues to spread, thanks not only to our project partners, but also to the important work of our many volunteers. Special thanks to members of the regional DAR, who have given their time and energy to help repot young spruce from two-inch into one-gallon containers. Through your support, we are making a real difference restoring the spruce-fir forests of the southern Blue Ridge and have already planted hundreds of trees along the Blue Ridge Parkway and other federal lands. Currently, volunteers are also helping repot native azaleas in need of added space to flourish.  That said, all of that work and support has made for an exciting season thus far. Our [2018 Native Plant Symposium: The Role of Pollinators in the Landscape](https://www.southernhighlandsreserve.org/2018-native-plant-symposium-the-role-of-pollinators-in-the-landscape/) was a great success thanks to presentations by Dr. Larry Mellichamp on floral sex, Tom Tribble on bird-friendly gardening and Steve Hughes with his fascinating birds of prey. We were honored to welcome [The Garden Conservancy](https://www.gardenconservancy.org/)’s Society of Fellows on their first official tour of western North Carolina. We expanded our staff with a new full-time position and welcome Anna Norton as Director of Communications and Outreach. We are thrilled to have Anna as a new member of the SHR team! | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | /var/folders/2q/4byt11n909z1xpmwb1z5x0n80000gn/T/com.microsoft.Word/WebArchiveCopyPasteTempFiles/6ecdb476-d38f-4bb4-ac7c-a449fdfa0555.jpg |  |  | | --- | | /var/folders/2q/4byt11n909z1xpmwb1z5x0n80000gn/T/com.microsoft.Word/WebArchiveCopyPasteTempFiles/ba9495c3-a7ca-4f84-b5cb-b0b9710d30fd.jpg | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | The Wildflower Labyrinth approaches the literal and figurative height of its season, full of color with Joe Pye Weed, Butterfly Weed, Echinacea, Baptista, Texas Tickseed and other flowering natives that attract a wide range of pollinators. And speaking of pollinators, we have just officially joined the [North Carolina Wildlife Federation’s Butterfly Highway](http://ncwf.org/programs/garden-for-wildlife/butterfly-highway/).  The [2018 Native Plant Sale](https://www.southernhighlandsreserve.org/events/2018-native-plant-sale/) is just around the corner, offering you the opportunity to take home some of the same species that we grow on the Reserve, as well as natives better suited to lower elevations. All the plants available have been grown from seed here in our living laboratory. We hope to see you then or at one of this year’s final [Visitors’ Days](https://www.southernhighlandsreserve.org/events/visitors-day-8/) or [Group Tours](https://www.southernhighlandsreserve.org/events/group-tour-open-for-reservation-34/).   Best regards, /var/folders/2q/4byt11n909z1xpmwb1z5x0n80000gn/T/com.microsoft.Word/WebArchiveCopyPasteTempFiles/d4ade153-5a18-409e-807c-32ba1d68fb78.png Kelly M. Holdbrooks  Executive Director | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Being There** *The Benefits of Being in Nature*  Stop what you’re doing. Get up. Walk outside. Chances are, depending on where you are at the time, you will immediately feel a little bit better—your mood may lighten, your thoughts may free up and your perspective may shift just a bit. Physical movement and change of light alone can account for some of this, but something more is involved when we move from the physically sedentary but emotionally hectic space and pace of the built world out into the natural world. | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | /var/folders/2q/4byt11n909z1xpmwb1z5x0n80000gn/T/com.microsoft.Word/WebArchiveCopyPasteTempFiles/ee7bd8b4-a629-4c24-af52-b7020cd2a140.jpg | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | More and more research is being done on the health benefits of spending time in nature. Of course, the idea that nature heals is not a new concept or a recent discovery. It is simply something that we have forgotten along the way to our current situation. Studies show that the average contemporary American spends a surprising 90% of the time indoors, with this increasing as an individual ages. So our arrival at such a condition has left us with nowhere to go but back to where we began—nature.  [Continue Reading](https://www.southernhighlandsreserve.org/being-there-the-benefits-of-being-in-nature/) | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | /var/folders/2q/4byt11n909z1xpmwb1z5x0n80000gn/T/com.microsoft.Word/WebArchiveCopyPasteTempFiles/60948cf4-3c44-44da-8237-2da1d036123b.jpg | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Cultivating Reciprocity** *Plants and Animals in Your Garden  Cultivate* is an active verb. We cultivate our gardens, among other things; it’s human endeavor. As such, it involves not only physical labor, but also planning, strategizing. Specifically, what to plant and how to arrange and design those particular species are among the first decisions that must be made. This decision-making process can be as much of the joy in gardening as smelling the roses after the fact. But in this process, we can get lost; we can fail to see the forest for the trees. While aesthetics play an obvious and central role in gardening, the big picture is important to keep in mind, and understanding nature’s reciprocity can help us focus back on the “forest”.  [Continue Reading](https://www.southernhighlandsreserve.org/cultivating-reciprocity-plants-and-animals-in-your-garden/) | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | /var/folders/2q/4byt11n909z1xpmwb1z5x0n80000gn/T/com.microsoft.Word/WebArchiveCopyPasteTempFiles/38d6696e-5094-4741-9afa-db1f1c389c6c.jpg | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Gardener's Corner** *With Director of Horticulture Eric Kimbrel*  With its warm weather and long days, summer beckons us outside and into its fruits of full bloom. We have been adding to the abundance by planting perennials for more even color throughout the garden. | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | /var/folders/2q/4byt11n909z1xpmwb1z5x0n80000gn/T/com.microsoft.Word/WebArchiveCopyPasteTempFiles/28c9a2ce-2c86-4a1d-9fbd-3bceb77264a3.jpg |  |  | | --- | | /var/folders/2q/4byt11n909z1xpmwb1z5x0n80000gn/T/com.microsoft.Word/WebArchiveCopyPasteTempFiles/0d27b780-03d2-413c-8ff2-ebbff19db6aa.jpg | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Indian Pinks (*Spigelia marilandica L.*) | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Turk's Cap Lilies (*Lilium superbum*) | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Another object of plenty has been rainfall. Few days have been without any, and many days have been filled with hard, soaking rains. One side effect is leaf gall (Exobasidium vaccinii)—a fungal disease common to native Rhododendron species and Leucothoe, exacerbated by rain. We have spent much of the summer removing this pest before it spreads further. We have also been spraying Rhododendron buds with ecologically friendly horticultural oil to control leafhoppers which transmit bud blast—another fungal pathogen that kills the buds. We continue to monitor our hemlocks for adult woolly adelgids, the non-native insects that are decimating the hemlock forests due to the lack of natural predator. We use dormant oil in this case as well to treat the pest, but we don’t stop there. Healthy trees are less susceptible to infestation, so we check the soil to see what may be at the root, so to speak, of the cause. And summer is always the season for pulling and spraying weeds.  [Continue Reading](https://www.southernhighlandsreserve.org/gardeners-corner-with-director-of-horticulture-eric-kimbrel/) | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **2018 Visitors' Season** *Two Visitors' Days Remain for 2018*  It's not too late to visit Southern Highlands Reserve this year!    Visitors' Days are held the first Tuesday of each month, April – October. They provide the perfect outing for backyard gardeners, plant enthusiasts or professionals in the fields of horticulture, design and ecology. On Visitors' Days, guests are led through the gardens by a Garden Tour Docent. Admission is $15/person.   Led by SHR’s Executive Director Kelly Holdbrooks, SHR's Private Group Tours offer a deeply personal look at the beauty and wonder of the Reserve. Group tours are ideal for garden clubs, plant societies, and master gardener groups. Admission is $25/person with a minimum of $250 per group.  Visit our [Tours and Events page](http://www.southernhighlandsreserve.org/events) for more information. Advance registration is required for all tours. | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | /var/folders/2q/4byt11n909z1xpmwb1z5x0n80000gn/T/com.microsoft.Word/WebArchiveCopyPasteTempFiles/b199cffb-431e-48e6-83e8-cee197385f0d.jpg | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Reflections *Go into the woods, get fresh balsam air, then come back and start strong.* George Masa, photographer responsible for the establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains as a National Park and for the entire NC portion of the Appalachian Trail.** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | /var/folders/2q/4byt11n909z1xpmwb1z5x0n80000gn/T/com.microsoft.Word/WebArchiveCopyPasteTempFiles/f2acdd56-a473-4eb5-b33c-63a5690c15ec.jpg | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [Read our recent press!](https://www.southernhighlandsreserve.org/links/) | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |
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