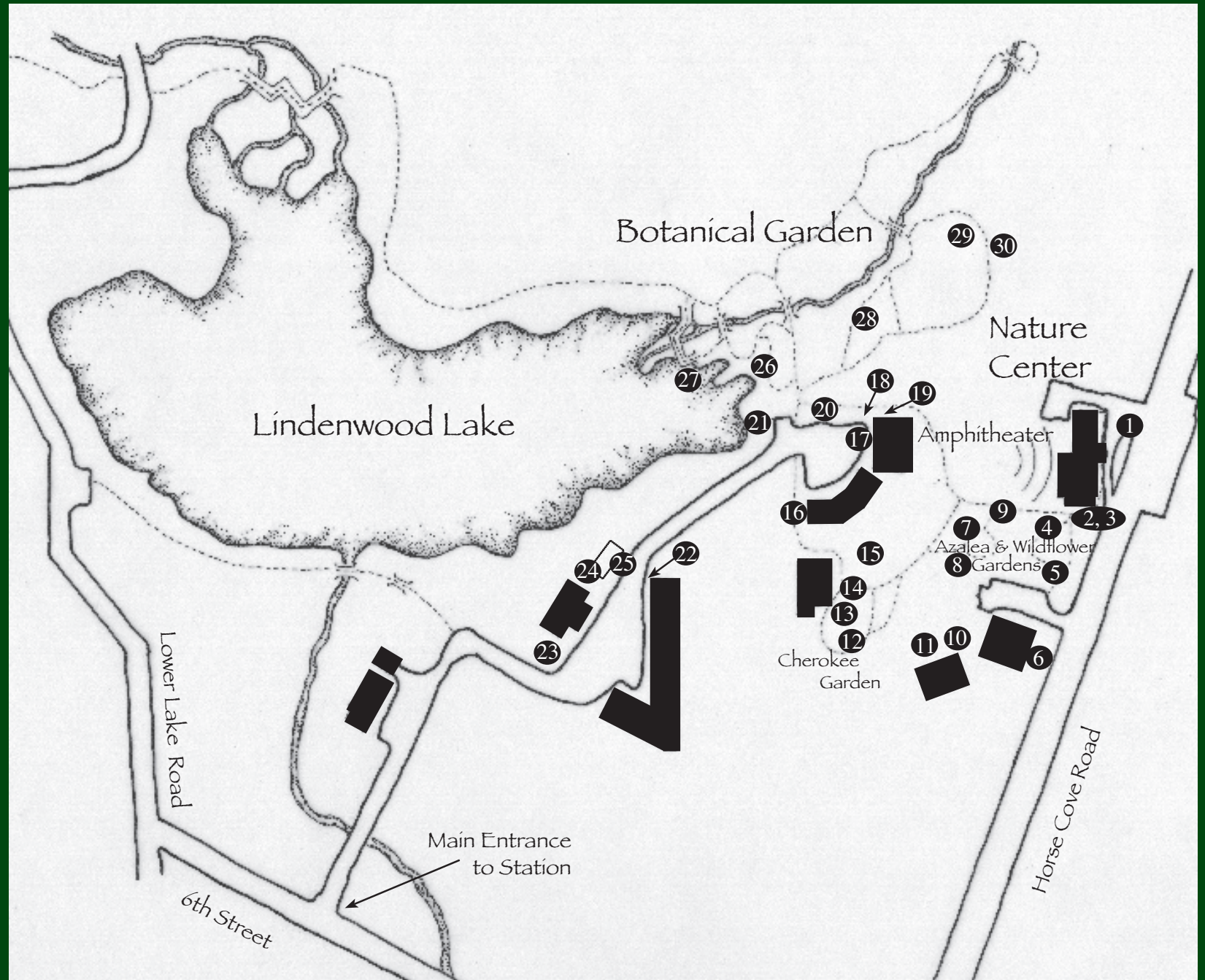


# Highlands Biological Station's



## William Bartram Trail





PLANTS OF THE HBS WILLIAM BARTRAM TRAIL

*It has been some 230 years since Philadelphian William Bartram’s memorable explorations of western North Carolina and the Georgia and South Carolina uplands. Bartram’s accounts of the flora, fauna, landscape, and people he met on his journey here in the spring of 1775 have captivated readers ever since his memoir, the Travels, appeared in 1791. Bartram’s astonishment at the grandeur of the ancient and lush southern Appalachian forest, his contagious excitement over new and beautiful “vegetable productions,” and his empathy and respect for the native people and settlers he befriended give us a compelling portrait of a time and place long gone. The Highlands Biological Station’s “Bartram Trail” celebrates William Bartram’s southern Appalachian journey in plants, featuring some 30 mountain and piedmont species with Bartram connections. We hope you enjoy walking the trail to admire our “charming circle of mountain vegetable beauties.”*

**1. Mountain or Fraser’s Magnolia • *Magnolia fraseri*.** In May 1775 Bartram stopped to study this magnolia on the slopes of Rabun Bald in Georgia; he dubbed a nearby peak “Mount Magnolia” in its honor.

**2. & 3. Crossvine • *Bignonia capreolata*, Yellow Jessamine • *Gelsemium sempervirens*.** Bartram admired these “sweet roving climbers” in forests beyond the abandoned Cherokee town of Keowee in NW South Carolina, May 1775. He was surprised to see them at high elevations associating with “the Canadian vegetables.”

**4. Sweetshrub • *Calycanthus floridus*.** At several locales in the North and South Carolina uplands, Bartram comments on the “fragrant,” “perfumed,” and “aromatic groves” of sweetshrub. This is a beetle-pollinated shrub.

**5. Franklin-tree • *Franklinia alatamaha*.** John and William Bartram discovered this species in 1765, on the banks of the Altamaha River in Georgia. They later named it for their friend Benjamin Franklin.

**6. Oakleaf Hydrangea • *Hydrangea quercifolia*.** Heading west from Augusta on the Lower Creek Trading Path, Bartram discovered this hydrangea on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1775 four miles east of Knoxville, Georgia.

**7. Flame Azalea • *Rhododendron calendulaceum*.** In the South Carolina uplands along the Keowee River, Bartram admired how this azalea “abounds and illuminates the hillsides” with its fiery orange blossoms.

**8. Sweet or Smooth Azalea • *Rhododendron arborescens*.** It is believed that John Bartram discovered this species in Pennsylvania. It was first introduced by the Bartrams to England about 1818.

**9. Grape • *Vitis* spp.** Bartram encountered grape vines so large he fancied they held up the trees: “...amongst other good purposes, they serve to uphold [the trees]: they are frequently nine, ten, and twelve inches in diameter.”

**10. Chickasaw Plum • *Prunus angustifolia*.** Bartram observed this tree in an abandoned Cherokee orchard northeast of Wrightsboro, Georgia; he surmised that it was cultivated there, imported from west of the Mississippi.

**11. Red Cedar • *Juniperus virginiana*.** Cedar berries attract cedar waxwings, which Bartram called the cedar bird: “...in the autumn when the Cedar berries are ripe...they arrive in large flights, [and] soon strip those trees of their berries...”

**12. Yaupon Holly • *Ilex vomitoria*.** In May 1775 Bartram was surprised to encounter these lowland hollies in the Nantahala (Jore) Mountains; cultivated widely in the SE by the native people for a strong drink made from the foliage, that was the only place in the mountains that he observed it growing.

**13. Strawberry • *Fragaria virginiana*.** Strawberries are mentioned several times in the *Travels*; here is a typical passage: “I...turned out my steed to graze and then advanced into the strawberry plains to regale on the fragrant, delicious fruit...”

**14. River Cane • *Arundinaria* spp.** Many large canebrakes were encountered on the trail: “...the native productions exceed any thing I had ever seen, particularly the Reeds or Canes...grow to a great height and thickness.”

**15. Black Oak • *Quercus velutina*.** Along the Little River near Wrightsboro, Georgia, Bartram marveled at the monumental black oaks: “...many of the black oaks measured eight, nine, ten, and eleven feet diameter five feet above the ground, as we measured several that were above thirty feet girt...”

**16. Golden-seal • *Hydrastis canadensis*.** In 1759 John Bartram’s friend Peter Collinson commented on a drawing of golden-seal made by the 20-year old William: “Billy sent me a delightful drawing of...the Yellow Root. Pray look out and send me a plant or two; for it seems a new genus.”

**17. Cow-parsnip • *Heracleum lanatum*.** This species was encountered in many mountain meadows, “exhibiting a fine shew, being rendered conspicuous even at a great distance, by its great height and spread, vast pennatifid leaves....” It is named for the Greco-Roman hero Hercules for its size.

**18. Lesser Rosebay • *Rhododendron minus*.** Bartram discovered this small-leaved rhododendron in April 1775, near the present-day site of the Augusta Canal Dam; “upon the rich rocky hills at the cataracts of Augusta.”

**19. Golden St. Johnswort • *Hypericum frondosum*.** This St. Johnswort, “of extraordinary shew and beauty,” was discovered by Bartram on the banks of Patsiliga Creek in Taylor County, Georgia, in July 1775.

**20. Large-flowered Evening Primrose • *Oenothera grandiflora*.** Bartram discovered this species—“perhaps the most pompous and brilliant herbaceous plant yet known to exist”—in Baldwin County a few miles above the town of Tensaw, Alabama.

**21. Clammy Locust or Rose-acacia • *Robinia viscosa*.** In late May 1775, near modern Oconee Station State Park, Bartram recognized this locust as new. This specimen was named a State Champion Tree in 1996.

**22. Red Buckeye • *Aesculus pavia*.** Bartram mentions this tree often in the *Travels*, but he was probably actually seeing a red form of the Painted Buckeye, *A. sylvatica*. Red buckeye is a favorite of hummingbirds.

**23. Painted Buckeye • *Aesculus sylvatica*.** In the South Carolina upstate in May 1775 Bartram noted “...a new and singularly beautiful species of *Aesculus pavia*,” thought to be a red form of this species.

**24. Trumpet Honeysuckle • *Lonicera sempervirens*.** This is one of the flowering vines that Bartram refers to as “sweet roving climbers” decorating the “lofty forests and odoriferous groves...”

**25. Dutchman’s Pipe • *Aristolochia macrophylla*.** In late May 1775, near Station Mountain, South Carolina, Bartram admired how this species “rambles over the trees and shrubs on the prolific banks” of mountain brooks. Look for pipevine swallowtail caterpillars on this vine.

**26. Swamp-pink • *Helonias bullata*.** Linnaeus named this species in 1753 based on specimens that came from John Bartram via his friend Peter Collinson in London; Collinson declared it “new & very Curious.”

**27. Pitcher Plants • *Sarracenia* spp.** William Bartram was the first to correctly identify the insectivorous nature of this plant: “insects... being invited down to sip the mellifluous exuvia, from the interior surface of the tube, where they inevitably perish ... All the *Sarracenia* are insect catchers...”

**28. Bigleaf Magnolia • *Magnolia macrophylla*.** Bartram found this species in central Alabama in July 1775: “I discovered, in the Creek Nation at W<sup>t</sup>. of Georgia a Species of Magnolia...very different from M<sup>r</sup>. Frazers. The leaves of which were very large nearly 2 feet in length, the Flowers, white, Very large, & Fragrant...”

**29. Mountain Camellia • *Stewartia ovata*.** Another May 1775 discovery made in Oconee County, South Carolina: “this is a new species of *Stewartia*, unknown to the European botanist, and not mentioned in any catalogues.”

**30. Shooting-star • *Dodecatheon meadia*.** Encountering this plant that he knew from Pennsylvannia along the Savannah River near Augusta, Bartram exclaimed “who would have expected to see...Dodecathean meadea grow in abundance in this hot climate!”

Bartram’s portrait by Charles Willson Peale and used with the permission of Independence Hall, Philadelphia. Map by Leslie C. Costa.