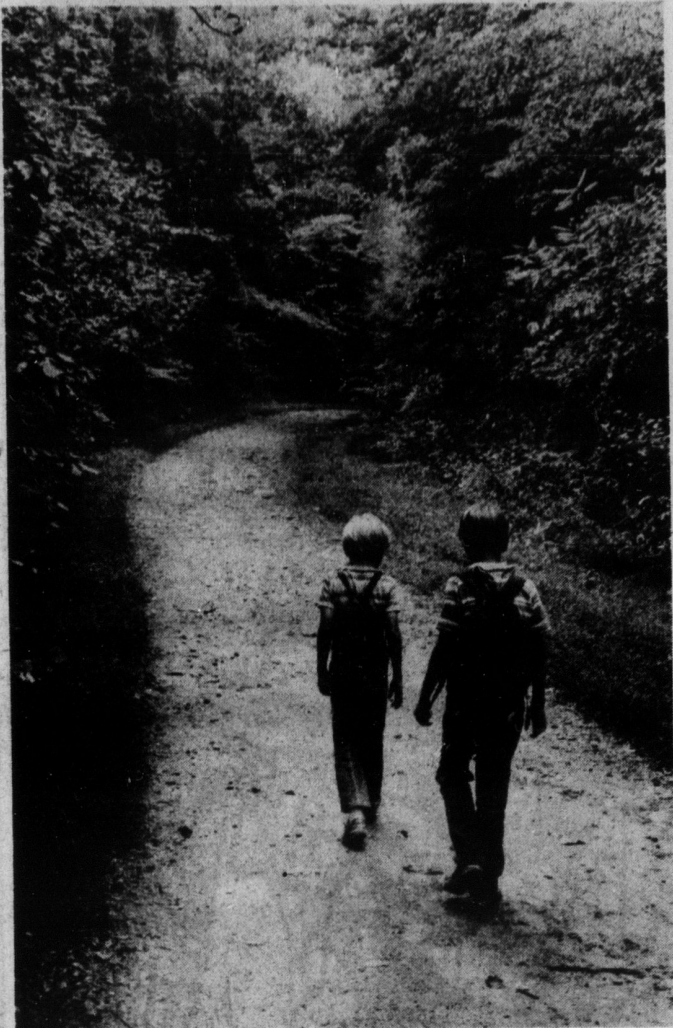


Some Of Nation's Prettiest Sights Here In Kings Mountain



By MARY CROWLEY
Drive along the country roads near Kings Mountain this time of the year and you will encounter ditches and banks covered with splashes of color, fence rows blanketed gracefully with blossoms, and further down the road you may see an entire field of color.

Here is nature's own garden—a garden unattended by man, one which grows spontaneously—growing here is a wild flower garden.

Look about at the royal heads of Queen Ann's lace, some in bloom and some dried up and looking like little bird nests. Notice the tall grasses blooming so splendidly, and under the trees, bracken ferns are turning gold and brown, stately heads of purple Joe Pye weed tower above the golden rod, black eyed Susans and blue chicory. Purple and lavender morning glories sparkle with dew in the early morning light. It is startling to see the hardy yellow bitterweed blooming from the cracks in concrete and growing alongside asphalt roads, seemingly oblivious to any form of pollution.

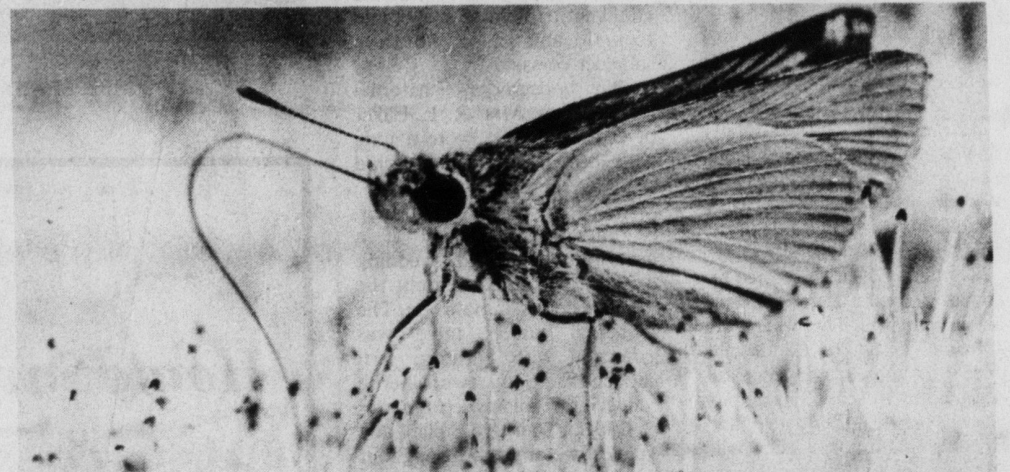
Autumn is a special time for hiking. The air is beginning to feel a bit brisk and the fall color is rich. Take a walk through the woods and you will find many colorful varieties of wild flowers. Some of these will be in full bloom, irresistible to the butterflies and bees, some bearing fresh edible food for birds and beasts—and hungry, weary hikers. Some will have long since gone to seed and their seed pods have dried into interesting and unusual patterns. A canopy of leaves from the hardwood trees shade much of the ground during the summer, therefore, only a few flowers will be found this time of the year, wherever the trees grow thickly together. Look there in the early spring. Most of the flowers you will see in the fall will be found along the roadside on the edges of the path, along streambeds, and the borders of woods—those places where the sunshine can reach them. It is not necessary to try to identify all you see, simply enjoy being out. Not only will you find delightment for the moment, but you will also make a fine memory to recall some cold wintry day.

The people of Kings Mountain are especially fortunate to have the trails of the state and national parks close by. These trails entice many people from miles away, and it would be a shame to overlook them simply because we happen to live nearby. The trails can hold as much adventure and enchantment for the native person as for the stranger.

The Kings Mountain National Military Park rangers are predicting around the first week of October to be the peak time for the leaves to be in color. The sourwoods have already turned red. Our early color season is due to the dry summer we have had and because of this extended dryness the colors are not expected to be as brilliant this year. But then again, the rangers say, the weather could change and we could have a lot more color. Predicting color is a pretty tricky business! Nevertheless, you can find beauty throughout the season observing the changes as they occur. Even the leafless trees of winter have a special beauty of their own.

Due in part, to the pine bark beetle, we can look forward to more colorful fall seasons in the years ahead. This area has experienced a lot of problems with the pine bark beetle. It has done extensive damage to the pines, killing a large percentage of them. Removal of the pine trees has made room for the hardwoods to grow, therefore, there will be more trees in the future to color and later, drop their leaves.

The logging operation has stirred up the wildlife, so be especially aware of the possibility of seeing a copperhead or timber rattler. Keep in mind all snakes are not deadly and your chance of seeing a poisonous one



is not too great. But, it is wise to remember that in nature one must be prepared for the unexpected. Use common sense and good judgment whenever you are out. Consider that most of the time you have to walk back the same distance as you hike, so keep track of the time, the weather, your water supply and how tired you are getting. If hiking is new to you, make it a rule to take brief but frequent rests. This gives you an excellent opportunity to observe something more closely. A general rule for planning your time is to allow about one third of your time to reach your destination. Many times your return trip will be more strenuous and slow. Your aim is not an endurance test but to have a refreshing and enjoyable time. So go ahead, get out and explore, take a drive or take a hike, you don't have to go far.

And remember, you can find as much beauty in some of the most common things as in the rarest of rare.



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