

## **2015 Elizabeth Ann Bartholomew Award Recipient— Patricia B. Cox**

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## 2015 Elizabeth Ann Bartholomew Award Recipient—Patricia B. Cox



Dr. Patricia B. Cox was given the Elizabeth Ann Bartholomew Award during the 2015 annual meeting of the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society (SABS) held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in conjunction with the Association of Southeastern Biologists (ASB). This award represents an untiring, unselfish, and enthusiastic professional and public work and service that brings botanical knowledge and understanding to students, peers, and the public. This year's award recipient is the embodiment of this award.

Pat Cox hails from Louisiana where she earned her B.S. and M.S. in Biology from University of Louisiana at Monroe. Her M.S. research was a floristic study of Morehouse Parish, Louisiana, under the direction of R. Dale Thomas. It was during this time, while she was working under one of the most prolific plant collectors in the southeast, that Pat broadened her knowledge of field botany throughout the Southeast. Pat received a Ph.D. in Botany from Louisiana State University under the direction of Dr. Lowell Urbatsch working on a taxonomic revision of *Rudbeckia* subgenus *Macrocline* (Asteraceae). She has published in *Castanea* and given presentations at the ASB and Botany conferences, and at the Natural Areas Conference. Twenty-five years ago, Pat came to the Ridge and Valley of East Tennessee. During the first 13 years, she had an academic career at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK). Pat taught undergraduate biology, field botany, and pteridology to undergraduate and graduate students. It was during her time at UTK that she

promoted organizations like SABS and ASB to her students and colleagues, and planned extensive field trips for these students while traveling to annual meetings. She took students to such places as the Smithsonian Institution, Dismal Swamp, Green Swamp, longleaf pine savannas in the Florida Panhandle, Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge, and Lake Martin in south Louisiana. Not only did she provide planning, means, logistics, and botanical knowledge during these trips, but she offered her tireless enthusiasm for exploration and seeing species still unseen.

Pat left UTK in 2003 and took a position as a Botanical Specialist for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). At TVA she continued to share her botanical knowledge with interns, volunteers, and new employees. She often sent emails out to a group of botanical contacts to let them know that she was monitoring large-flowered skullcap or Ruth's golden aster and offered field trip opportunities for anyone interested in seeing something new. Pat retired from TVA in 2014 and returned to UTK to teach field botany in the summer and work part-time in the UTK Herbarium. From this position, she continues to teach and open young minds to the excitement of the botanical world.

For the past 15 years, with the help of numerous volunteers and in conjunction with the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) project in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, Pat has been researching the diversity and distribution of fern species in the Smokies. Specifically, her project involves recruiting and training volunteers to identify fern species and using the trails as transects to map fern diversity and species distributions throughout the park. Pat is also a member of the organizing committee and a trip leader for the Spring Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage, which has been an annual event in the Smokies for the past 65 years. Since 1991, she has been involved with leading this massive public outreach effort, which allows about 700 people a year to go on a hike with an expert in a particular field from botany, birds, and salamanders to insects, mammals, or fungi. In addition to her work with ATBI and the Pilgrimage, she served as the first two-year president of the Association of Southeastern Biologists, she is an emeritus member of the Board of Directors for Discover Life in America. She has also served the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society in various capacities, most recently as membership secretary and as Editor of *Castanea*. Pat is a member of the American Fern Society and has given presentations to several southeastern garden clubs, native plant societies, and botanical gardens, and has served as a field trip leader for the American Fern Society's national meetings in Knoxville, Tennessee, and Mobile, Alabama.

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