

Marie Barlow Mellinger, 92, of Clayton, died Thursday, Dec. 28, 2008, at home from a brief illness.

She was born in Cook County, Ill., to William Frederick and Mae Lessing Barlow. She spent her childhood and early adult years in Crivitz, Wis. She graduated from Marinette Teachers College with emphases in language arts and history and later completed studies in botany and environmental subjects.

She and her late husband, E.O. Mellinger, purchased property in Rabun County about 1958. They frequently visited the area and moved here full time upon his retirement from the Savannah Wildlife Refuge.

She was active in teaching nature workshops at state parks, Foxfire and Elder Hostel programs. Topics for the programs, and at least five books she wrote, included wild edibles, native plant landscaping, protection and identification of native vegetation and Cherokee history. She had a weekly column, "Under the North Georgia Grapevine," in *The Tribune* for more than 30 years. She served as president of the Georgia Botanical Society, Georgia Ornithological Society, Friends of the Mountains and Rhododendron Garden Club. She was a lifetime member of the Garden Club of Georgia.

She participated in committee work with then-Gov. Jimmy Carter on the Flint River Project. She also helped complete a native plant landscaping project at the Governor's Mansion in Atlanta. She and her friends established the Incredible Edibles, a group that meets for meals at different sites in Georgia several times each year. Each dish contains at least one wild edible. Numerous conservation awards and scholarships have been made on behalf of her decades of work. Visitors frequented her home as her eyesight failed and mobility became restricted during her final days.

A memorial service and gathering of friends will be held 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 27, at the Chattooga Conservancy in Clayton.

Memorial contributions can be made to: Chattooga Conservancy, 2368 Pinnacle Drive, Clayton, GA 30525; Black Rock Mountain State Park, P.O. Drawer A, Mountain City, GA 30562; or Foxfire, P.O. Box 541, Mountain City, GA 30562.

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